LIBRARY
STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE

THE Nation

VOLUME 149 NEW YORK · SATURDAY · NOVEMBER 4, 1939 NUMBER 19

The Shape of Things

THE CITY OF FLINT IS REPORTED, AS WE write, to be somewhere off the coast of Norway with its German prize crew hoping to slip it through the British blockade into a German port. Whatever the conclusion to its physical odyssey, its case seems destined for a much longer legal journey. The State Department has protested sharply to the Soviet government on the ground that the vessel should have been turned over to its American captain on arrival at the supposedly neutral port of Murmansk. According to some authorities on international law, however, the Russians have acted within their rights, since under Article 23 of the Thirteenth Hague Convention a neutral power may allow a prize to be taken into its ports and there sequestrated pending decision of a prize court. Russia and Germany accepted this article, but the United States refused, maintaining its policy of barring entry to prizes except for humanitarian purposes. When the City of Flint first steamed into Russian waters, Moscow itself seems to have adopted the American doctrine, for it interned the German crew. Its reversal of this action and its acceptance of the German view that the ship had to seek shelter owing to lack of charts—later the reason was given as engine trouble—suggest uncertainty about the legal position.

*

PASSAGE OF THE NEUTRALITY BILL IN THE Senate by a more than two-to-one majority ended the most spectacular phase of the fight to repeal the arms embargo. The bill has now gone to the House, and there is a strong possibility that the deciding vote will be reached not later than Thursday or Friday of this week. Although the debate in the House will be brief, the vote will be much closer than in the Senate. Some Administration leaders place the margin at thirty votes, but it will probably be much smaller. The bill as it emerged from the Senate was, in general, more satisfactory than either the Bloom bill considered by the House last summer or the Pittman measure introduced in the Senate at the beginning of the special session. The restrictions on American ships visiting British and French ports in the Pacific, Indian, and South Atlantic oceans have been struck out. Exemption was also granted to American ships visiting ports in Bermuda, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. The ninety-day credit provision was eliminated, but efforts to force payment in strict cash—gold or American currency—were defeated. Whether the House will confine debate to the arms-embargo issue or new amendments will be accepted is still uncertain.

*

MUSSOLINI'S SUDDEN REORGANIZATION OF his Cabinet is clearly of more than casual significance. Achille Starace, who has long held the all-important post of secretary-general of the Fascist Party and has become chief of staff of the militia, has always been regarded as among the chief proponents of the Rome-Berlin axis. So has Dino Alfieri, Minister of Popular Culture and Propaganda, another victim of the shake-up, while General Pariani, who is replaced as chief of the general staff by Marshal Graziani, is the officer who early this year worked out a plan for military cooperation with Germany. Statements in Berlin minimize the changes, but the German ambassador in Rome has received a hasty summons to report to Hitler.

*

MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS ACCOUNT FOR 5 per cent of our national income and are of vital importance in every family budget. Yet a report by the Federal Trade Commission on concerted efforts to hold up milk prices in certain cities was buried in the back pages of leading metropolitan newspapers. Nor have the similar conclusions of a nation-wide investigation into the milk situation published in the November issue of *Fortune*—clearly a case of man bites dog—received much greater attention. We recommend this article to all our readers. It shows that without reducing the price to the farmer milk could be sold in most cities at nine or ten cents a quart. The huge spread between the price the farmer gets and that which the housewife pays is in part due to the expensive method of door-to-door delivery in bottles. But extraordinary efforts have been made in many places to prevent milk from being put up in cartons and sold in stores at a lower price. In some cities, *Fortune* points out, stores are forced by law to sell at the same price charged for doorstep delivery. A Boston ordinance not only fixed a one-cent differential as maximum

Published weekly and copyright, 1939, in the U. S. A. by The Nation, Inc., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter, December 13, 1897, at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1897.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but ordered that milk sold in paper containers should be priced one cent above bottled milk. As a result, milk consumption in the Boston area dropped 100,000 quarts a day. Who is responsible for such crimes against children's health? According to *Fortune,* the big cooperatives, the big dairy companies, and the Milk Wagon Drivers' Union have all exercised pressure against the growth of store sales. The willingness of the cooperatives to play the dairy companies' game is amazing, for greater consumption of fluid milk would certainly aid the farmers. Yet they seem to have been sold on the erroneous notion that any cut in the price spread must be at the farmers' expense.

*

THE DEFEAT OF PREMIER DUPLESSIS IN LAST week's Quebec elections ends a dark chapter in Canada's political history. Elected three years ago on a reform platform in protest against Liberal corruption, Duplessis set up a virtual dictatorship along totalitarian lines. His most notorious essay in this direction, the so-called "padlock" law, permitted the police to padlock any private dwelling, hall, or meeting-house if a raid disclosed the presence of "communist" literature; the term "communist" was purposely left undefined, but was often interpreted to include any progressive or labor literature. Throughout his entire time in office Duplessis was in conflict with the Dominion government. He opposed constitutional reform that would have enabled the Dominion government to enact such social legislation as unemployment insurance. The election was called to demonstrate Quebec's opposition to conscription, but this was a false issue since all parties in Quebec were pledged to resist conscription. Duplessis's dramatic overturn suggests that the Catholic church, all-powerful in Quebec, has revised its views about the desirability of a semi-fascist regime. It helped to put Duplessis in; it has now aided in kicking him out.

*

THE FIRST ENCYCLICAL TO BE ISSUED BY Pius XII has already won high honors in Germany and Italy: in the former it was suppressed; in the latter it was subjected to the Fascist blue pencil. The Pope's lyrical (and politic) reference to "our dear Italy, fruitful garden of the faith" has been given wide publicity in the Italian press. But his reflections on Colossians 3:10, 11—"Where there is neither Gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond or free. But Christ is all and in all"—have been discreetly omitted. They are too pointed a reference to the racism newly adopted by the Duce. The Pope's meditations on patriotism were couched in terms equally uncomfortable for "Aryans." "The Divine Master Himself," said His Holiness, "gave an example of his preference for His own country and fatherland, as He wept over the coming destruction of the Holy City." Pius XII's stand against treaty-breaking and his reference to "our dear Poland" and its coming resurrection also help to explain why the encyclical did not make the front page of the *Völkischer Beobachter.* Two days later the Pope gave practical effect to his denunciation of racism by elevating two Negroes to the episcopacy. These, it is said, will be the first Negro bishops in the church's history.

*

THE REFUSAL OF THE CZECHS TO ACCEPT enslavement quietly and work with a will to help their taskmasters win the war is proving extremely inconvenient for the German high command. It means that a large amount of man-power must be diverted from the fighting lines and munition factories to garrison and terrorize the conquered provinces. The same thing is true in Poland, although for the time being the devastation and state of famine prevailing in that land may help to keep the Poles comparatively quiet. We may be sure, however, that the gallant defenders of Warsaw are not going to take kindly to the Nazi yoke. Nor will such decrees as that issued by the Nazi Commissioner in Bydgoszcz, providing that Poles are to be treated as "inferiors," help to turn them into willing workers. Even terror has its limits, as is shown by the way Independence Day was celebrated in Prague despite prohibitions. Quietly and silently the citizens paraded the streets, dressed in Sunday clothes with black ties and black armbands. The German police seem to have concluded it was wiser to leave the task of controlling the crowds to the Czech gendarmerie. A number of students were arrested, however, for shouting anti-German slogans, and late at night shooting was reported in several parts of the city. Meanwhile the Slovakians appear to be extremely irked by their "protectors." There are reports of increasing anti-Nazi agitation and of arrests of many prominent persons, including leading members of the Hlinka Guards. The economic situation in Slovakia is said to be critical owing to the locust-like activities of the Germans, who have stripped the country of foodstuffs and raw materials.

*

SECRETARY MORGENTHAU HAS PROVIDED his own postscript to I. F. Stone's Portrait of a Dollar-a-Year Man in *The Nation* for September 30. The subject of that portrait, Earle Bailie, leading partner in J. and W. Seligman and Company, has been "released" by the Secretary. "Released" with him were the other two dollar-a-year banker-advisers referred to in that article—W. R. Burgess, of National City, and Tom K. Smith, of the Boatmen's National Bank of St. Louis. The Secretary announced that the Treasury's success in its Com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

modity Credit Corporation exchange offering—hardly more than a routine operation—indicated that the emergency situation had subsided. "The tension in the government bond market has improved so much, the Secretary said, that he had released the three banking advisers whom he called in early in September" (New York *Times*). But there are emergencies and emergencies. Later at the same press conference the Secretary explained that " 'in the tremendous shake-up that is going on in the world today' it would be necessary for him to have the continued advice of three economic advisers named at the same time as the bankers." We suspect that the real emergency was the criticism evoked by the appointment of Old Guard bankers as emergency advisers to the New Deal Treasury.

They Cry War

SINCE the collapse of Poland the most vigorous fighting of the war has taken place on the front pages of the American press. But even our journalists, for all their vigor and enterprise, cannot continue to fight a world war by themselves, and are beginning to succumb to the lotus-eater tempo of the western front. It is worth noting, almost as one might a historic event, that on October 30, for the first time since the war began, the New York *Times* appeared with a front page of chaste single-column headlines. The "war" was on page 4. The New York *Herald Tribune* still felt that the war was worth page 1. But its cable beginning "The worst autumnal weather France has had in a decade. . . . Rain has been falling steadily in Lorraine" seems to have come from sources close to the Paris weather bureau. There are sound strategic reasons for the Franco-British policy of fighting a defensive war, but the German failure to attack seems so out of keeping with Nazi "dynamism" as to stir the suspicion that the Third Reich is somewhat less than totalitarian in its feeling about the war. Von Ribbentrop's speech at Danzig was more defensive in tone than is customary with Hitler and his lieutenants. The *Essener Nationale Zeitung,* supposedly Göring's organ, provided our press with scare headlines the next day by saying, "The time has come in which the war desired by England must rain down in full force upon the British Isles themselves." But so far—if *Paris-Soir* is to be believed—the chief attack on England seems to have been the purely verbal one made by the Führer in Miss Unity Freeman-Mitford's Munich apartment. Patriotism thereupon prevailed over hero worship, and Hitler's most publicized female admirer is reported to have attempted suicide. This, while regrettable, does not constitute a major blow to the British Empire.

It may be that Hitler will yet spring one of his characteristic surprises. Perhaps the "surprise" in this case is to be German passivity. It took a great deal of indignation and many affronts to work the Western democracies up to the pitch necessary for mobilization; Hitler may be planning to wear them down by sheer ennui. Correspondents report that British fliers are beginning to find the inaction irksome, and Britain is full of complaints about government "controlitis"—covering a variety of annoyances from the blackout to censorship. One wonders whether the Führer hopes that his foes will beg for peace out of boredom. But this kind of waiting game accords neither with Nazi temperament nor with Germany's economic position, which can hardly stand too prolonged a blockade. It seems more likely that diplomatic activity behind the scenes is as furious as the war is sedate, with London, Berlin, and Moscow striving to sell each other out at the highest price they can get. So long as the armies face each other in the west, Moscow holds the best cards in this diplomatic poker game. At one and the same time it remains neutral, makes conquests in the Baltic, and summons the Council of the League.

The most paradoxical aspect of this war is the contrast between the action in the east, where there is "peace," and the inaction in the west, where there is "war." Neither London nor Berlin is committing non-aggression on its neighbors. While the Finns are still having their minds made up for them, the Rumanians are frantically looking about for some means of support against an expected Soviet offer of "mutual assistance" in which Bulgaria, Hungary, and Russia will mutually assist each other to slice off those sections of Rumania which were taken from them after the last war. One correspondent in London piously points out that "Hungary . . . is a Catholic country," presumably implying that Budapest would not join in if Moscow began to make a meal of Rumania. But Catholic countries have been known to lapse in their foreign policies from strict adherence to the Sermon on the Mount, and other reports hint that Hungary would give Russia the Carpatho-Ukraine in return for Transylvania.

Anything may happen, and when even Chamberlain adopts a mellow tone in speaking of the Soviets, one cannot exclude the possibility that Russia may decide to be neutral in favor of Britain instead of neutral in favor of Germany. But it is also well to keep in mind the wishful thinking that goes on to right and left of us. Some British Tories find it hard to believe that Hitler can look on the advance of Bolshevism with equanimity, and some of our own liberals find it hard to believe that Stalin does not share their devotion to the Western culture menaced by the Nazi tide. But so long as the British declare it their aim to "overthrow Hitlerism," and they can hardly promise less, is not Hitler forced to lean more and more on Moscow? And Moscow more and more on Hitler, in fear lest a German military dictatorship under British auspices might revive the *Drang nach Osten?*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keeping Down Prices

A NUMBER of our leading industrialists have attempted in the past few weeks to damp down the war-boom fever. They have declared that war business is an unhealthy basis for prosperity; they have deprecated speculative buying and expressed intentions of discouraging price inflation. No doubt these good resolutions are partly due to the knowledge that Washington is keeping a very watchful eye on the price situation. But although business magnates have often given evidence of astonishingly short memories, we may perhaps give them credit on this occasion for remembering the way in which the 1937 recovery was cut short by a punctured inventory boom.

Since the beginning of September rapid expansion has brought industrial production back almost to the 1937 level. To what extent the additional goods produced have gone into warehouses, either as a safeguard against future scarcity or in the hopes that rising prices will enable their sale at an increased profit, is a matter of dispute. But if present output rates are to be maintained, it is obvious that there must be a rise in consumption commensurate with that in production. Clearly, then, nothing should be done to reduce purchasing power, which in any case is apt to lag behind production in the early phases of a recovery. Hence in its own interests, no less than in those of the economy as a whole, business should do everything possible to curb rising prices. This is a matter of simple arithmetic. If prices rise on the average 10 per cent while consumers' incomes as a whole increase only 5 per cent, the actual volume of goods which those incomes can buy must be diminished.

At the present time the general price level is still well below that of 1937. The sharp upturn of early September has been checked pretty effectively, and many of the more speculative food products and raw materials have shed a large part of their gains. Meanwhile, there have been few advances in important industrial products, despite pressure on "price leaders" to advance quotations. A struggle is now going on inside the steel industry around this question. With output up to over 90 per cent of capacity, many steel men feel that a golden opportunity has come to hoist prices and boost profits. They are disgusted to find, however, that United States Steel, to which they look for leadership in price policy, is hesitating to make a move. Perhaps the management is aware that the demand for steel could very easily be curtailed by higher quotations; certainly it is conscious of the strong disapproval which such a step would arouse in Washington.

The economic advisers of the Administration are keenly alive to the dangers of a price boom at the present time, and they are particularly anxious to prevent any advance in steel. For this basic commodity, they contend, is the bell-wether of industry. It accounts for something like a sixth of the value of manufacturing output in this country; it is a basic material for nearly all other industries. Thus an increase in steel prices is very apt to lead to a general advance in industrial prices.

Actually there has been some leveling up of steel quotations since the war started owing to the reduction of discounts and allowances. But the cuts made earlier in the year remain in effect, although guaranties of delivery at existing prices after the beginning of next year are being refused. Those steel-makers in favor of price increases are calling attention to the sharp rises in such important raw materials as scrap, coal, and ferro-manganese. They are less willing to acknowledge the reduction of costs resulting from near-capacity production. Yet there can be no denying the magnitude of these savings. Bethlehem's third-quarter report just published shows that with production averaging 70.1 per cent of capacity profits jumped to over five million dollars compared with under half a million in the corresponding period of 1938, when only 46.4 per cent of capacity was employed. Bethlehem is now operating at 100 per cent of capacity, and so long as it can keep up volume is clearly in a position to return ample profits. Mr. Grace, announcing these results, stated: "With the volume we have now we see no reason to advance steel prices unless something happens to increase costs. We do not want to have an inflated situation and then have the bubble burst later on."

This conforms very closely with the attitude of Administration economists and offers ground for hope that the arguments of the latter have proved convincing. There is no getting away from the fact that the steel industry, despite appearances of competition, is a semi-monopoly, and as such its structure and policies will shortly engage the attention of the Temporary National Economic Committee. This will provide an opportunity for its outstanding figures to defend the principles of price leadership. There could be no better way of doing so than by thrusting aside the temptations which the immediate demand for steel presents.

From Poll to Poll

TO MOST Americans the central fact about the war in Europe is its failure to conform to the advance build-up. The contrast between expectation and reality may explain the perceptible shifts in American opinion which have occurred since the war began. Numerous surveys, especially those made by the Gallup Institute and *Fortune*, agree that such shifts have occurred; they also agree on the major drift, if not the precise details, of the change. If we correlate these and other tests of opinion, the dominant trends become fairly clear. There

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has been a significant increase in the ranks of those who want the United States to stay out of the war even if England and France should be losing. In the first week of the war 44 per cent of those polled by the Gallup Institute favored our intervention—with our army and navy—in that eventuality; by mid-October the figure had fallen to 29 per cent. There has been a simultaneous decline in the number of those who believe that, whether we like it or not, our entrance into the war is ultimately "inevitable."

Although the polls have been under heavy fire in recent weeks, with General Johnson leading the offensive against them, the tendencies described in these recent inquiries seem to us familiar and real. And on the surface they might be interpreted as an appreciable victory for the German Propaganda Ministry. Unfortunately for Herr Goebbels, one factor has remained almost fixed amid the shifts. In September the *Fortune* survey reported that 83.1 of those interviewed desired an Allied victory. In October that figure had risen to 84.3. In the same interval the number of German sympathizers had increased from 1 per cent to 1.3 per cent. This scarcely resembles a Nazi landslide.

If, since the war started, the Allied cause has actually increased in popularity while the Nazi adherents have remained a tiny minority, what explains the apparent growth in anti-interventionist feeling? The most plausible explanation is that, while American sympathy remains overwhelmingly with the democracies, the intensity of that allegiance has diminished—with a concurrent lessening of American enthusiasm for sacrifices to avert a Nazi triumph. The change might be traced to the ambiguity of Allied war aims, to the spiritless and incongruous leadership of Neville Chamberlain, to the failure of Allied aid to Poland, to British shortsightedness on the issue of Indian independence, to renewed memories of American losses in the last war, and to the large-scale increase of isolationist propaganda. But the decisive element, we suspect, is the military character of the war.

We had studied the form-charts of war for a good many years. We had been warned to expect the pitiless bombing of London and prompt retaliation, the speedy envelopment of a whole continent under a blanket of frightfulness. When the war finally came, a thousand rumors streamed out of Washington: England and France would be doomed unless we were in the trenches by Christmas, six months was the maximum of possible Allied resistance without our aid. But eight weeks have passed, London remains intact, the "Second World War" is not yet even a general European war, the Allies proceed methodically with the task of defense and blockade, and Hitler hesitates to unleash the "war in earnest." Our instinctive dread of sending young men into war is deep; and it grows stronger in the absence of vivid and conflicting emotional pressures such as a *Blitzkrieg* would produce. The military character of the war has not merely diminished American enthusiasm for our early entrance; it has nourished the belief, irrespective of desire, that we shall be able to stay out. For if the war is to be fought at sea and in the air, for a considerable period at least, the need of American man-power is abruptly deflated.

In this setting of war-time tranquillity American opinion is registered today. But suppose that tomorrow the *Blitzkrieg* descends? Suppose that the images of total war, of which we had a preview in Spain and China and Poland, suddenly come true? And suppose that Americans are confronted, not with the hypothetical question of an inquiring reporter, but with the immediate threat of Anglo-French collapse? To what extent can polls taken during this strange half-war prophesy American emotions after long and brutal real war? What the polls can provide is a systematic and probably accurate fever-chart as the war progresses. They can hardly furnish a blueprint of American behavior in a future entirely subject to change without notice.

Japan's Soft Answer

AFTER floundering for weeks in indecision after the signing of the Soviet-German pact, Japan has apparently decided on a desperate effort to regain British and American friendship. Conversations are scheduled to open within a few days between Sir Robert Craigie, British ambassador at Tokyo, and Admiral Nomura, the Japanese Foreign Minister, to reconsider the issues growing out of the Tientsin dispute. Advance reports indicate that Japan is prepared to accept a compromise on the demands which led to a breakdown of negotiations last August. Also within a few days, according to present plans, conversations will open between Nomura and Joseph C. Grew, the American ambassador, for the adjustment of American claims against the Japanese army in China. The Japanese hope that these discussions can be made the opening wedge for the negotiation of a new trade treaty to replace the one abrogated by the United States last July. There are indications that in exchange for recognition of the puppet Wang Ching-wei regime, scheduled to be set up at Nanking almost any day, Japan will offer to respect American treaty rights in the occupied sections of China.

Six months ago we should have said that any settlement between Great Britain and Japan was impossible. Today it is a very real possibility. Britain is at war and has everything to gain from liquidating its dispute in the East. Moreover, Japan is a convenient pawn to play against Russia in Britain's attempts to keep the Soviets from going into the war on the side of Germany.

The United States has no such reason for accepting Japan's sudden offer of friendship. There is not the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slightest chance that this country will extend recognition either to Wang Ching-wei's regime or to the corresponding puppet state in Manchuria. Japan does not really expect this. It hopes to gain some recognition of the "special situation" which led to the restrictions on American trade in China and to forestall, if possible, Congressional action to embargo all American trade with Japan. If an Anglo-Japanese settlement is reached, there is danger that Japan's hopes may be fulfilled. While the United States has never precisely followed a "parallel policy," it has repeatedly hung back awaiting British support.

Japan may be expected to throw all its energies into the campaign to forestall the embargo because a Japanese victory in China is impossible without American assistance. Therefore we shall doubtless be hearing that the Japanese government has turned over a new leaf. All sorts of promises of good behavior will be made. To these gestures there is one honorable reply. The United States is ready to extend its hand in friendship when Japanese troops have been withdrawn from China in accordance with the principles of the Nine-Power Pact. Japanese promises are meaningless. Unless they are backed up by action, the United States must not swerve in its determination to dissociate itself economically from participation in Japanese aggression.

The Law and Mr. Dies

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

I HAVE always liked revolutionists. This is a dangerous confession with Martin Dies abroad in the land and every milk-and-water liberal under suspicion of conspiratorial leanings. But it stands as a fact. Robin Hood and Huckleberry Finn are the rebels who won my earliest allegiance, but as the years multiplied I added other more contemporary heroes. I listened enraptured to the rousing, rasping voice of Emma Goldman in the old Ferrer School, concealing only a mild disappointment at the fact that she looked like a composite of my female teachers at the Horace Mann High School. But Eugene V. Debs, although the mildest-mannered man that ever attempted to scuttle the capitalist system, was a more satisfactory hero. He was bold and uncompromising; he was gentle and human. One could easily imagine the New Society blossoming in a world populated mostly by Eugene V. Debses.

Came the Revolution. The most ruthless and inefficient of tyrannies was wiped out by the most intrepid and experienced of revolutionaries. A year earlier, in coffee houses in Vienna or Zurich or the lower East Side, those same men might have seemed less awe-inspiring; but the revolution transformed them into creatures of high destiny assigned to the role of constructing out of vast shambles a new and decent world. Their pasts were floodlighted by their glamorous present; conspiracy and even violence became them. I recall writing a piece in the winter of 1917-18 about the New York days of Leon Trotsky. It was almost as detailed as a *Fortune* article. I talked to a man in a store on Third Avenue who had sold Trotsky a "suite" of furniture. Photographers took pictures of the exterior of the flat house in the Bronx in which he had lived. Ludwig Lore told me disarming stories of Trotsky's ways with children, while his former colleagues on *Novy Mir* dismissed my questions contemptuously, explaining that the personal lives of revolutionists were unimportant.

The article was never printed. Complete with pictures, text, and a translation of an essay by Trotsky on the significance of gum-chewing in American life, it lies today in a box in my attic. The editor of the paper, Bruce Barton, decided not to use the piece because, as he explained, *Every Week* was printed in Springfield, Ohio, and it was as good as certain that by the time the issue it was scheduled for appeared everyone would have forgotten Leon Trotsky. The point of this story is not the fallibility of even the most high-priced editorial judgment. That perhaps needs no demonstration. I tell the story because it brings back to me sharply a state of mind that time and the processes of history have very nearly submerged. But it existed, and no doubt it produced certain standards and expectations that lurk to this day behind the curtains of disillusionment.

Perhaps Earl Browder cried when he was arrested the other day, as the newspapers reported. Perhaps he didn't. If he did, his tears are easy to understand. Do you remember the emotions experienced by Johannes Pinneberg, the bedraggled hero of "Little Man, What Now?" when he was first arrested? He was sick and humiliated. His whole being craved respectability, and he tried to look upon his slow progress toward the gutter as a series of accidents that had left him essentially untouched. He was still a little bourgeois who had been badly treated.

For four years the Communist Party has been suffering from a split personality, not unlike Johannes's. One half of its being has clung to the bourgeois comforts of democratic action and ideals; it has been hanging around the fleshpots of political respectability and has even succeeded in snagging an occasional morsel when the cooks weren't watching. On the walls of party headquarters Lenin and Stalin have hobnobbed with Washington and Jefferson. The *Daily Worker* covers the ball field as fully as the picket line. Organizations formed for a wide variety of democratic ends have been supported—or captured—by Communists, who may indeed have looked upon them as "transmission belts" but who none the less fraternized with the rest of the boys and treated even the stuffiest middle-class members with a nice condescension.

But the other half of the Communist personality has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been busy with old-line conspiratorial contrivings. False passports, hidden sources of income, mysterious and secret missions, elaborate political activities designed to support, by a complicated Goldbergian system of joints and elbows, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union—the old revolutionary impulses were still at work. Split personalities result in a miserably ineffectual whole. It is natural that Earl Browder, representing the conflicting habits, policies, strategic methods of the Communist Party, should have resented his arrest. Lenin in like circumstances would not have cried. Neither would Debs. And for that matter, neither would Franklin D. Roosevelt. The revolutionist would break the law if necessary to achieve his political ends, but he would also accept the penalty of the law when it caught up with him. He would not consider himself persecuted. He would neither expect nor ask favors of the government whose code he was attempting to evade; he would go to prison calmly and without complaint; and then, if possible, he would escape. The democrat would not break the law in the first place. He would work within the law and demand its protection. If he were attacked or suppressed or arrested he would lash himself to the Bill of Rights and dare his persecutors to overthrow him and it together.

Mr. Browder, implementing democratic professions with revolutionary technique, was easy game for Mr. Dies. Liberals will waste no particular sympathy on him as a law-breaker, though they will insist that his trial be a fair one and his punishment made to fit a very minor crime. But the case of the League for Peace and Democracy is another matter and demands the attention and protest of everyone who takes his democratic beliefs seriously. The league is an above-ground, legal organization open to anyone who supports its program. It draws no color line and consequently harbors in its membership an active minority of Communists. The Communist Party at times backed the league and even gave some money to it. The league has supported a program of resistance to fascism here at home as well as in Europe to which almost any liberal person would subscribe; if it has been "controlled" by its Communist members, their influence has been singularly moderate. Not even before the committee has the league been accused of "subversive" activities. When the committee published the names of federal employees who were also members—or on the mailing list—of the League for Peace and Democracy, it was with the clear intention of ruining the political reputation of a group of men and women who admittedly represent a wide variety of points of view. The President was restrained when he described this outrage as a "sordid" performance. It was, in fact, a job of character assassination that would have done credit to the Ogpu or the Gestapo. Fortunately it snapped back in its authors' faces; the best friends of the committee joined its severest critics in condemning the whole procedure, and I believe that Mr. Dies may have discovered that persecution is still unpopular in a nation that is still democratic.

But the incident is disturbing just the same. If activities such as those carried on by the league can expose persons to threat and attack, no civil rights are secure. The Dies committee is doing its best to turn democrats into revolutionists and drive law-abiding organizations underground. If it fails, it will not be because Mr. Dies has learned to distinguish between legal and illegal acts. It will be because Americans who have chosen to be neither Browderites nor out-and-out revolutionists but ordinary citizens exercising their right to organize and protest refuse to be intimidated. Mrs. Roosevelt summed up the liberal position with beautiful economy when she said at the *Herald Tribune* Forum last week:

> I am not afraid of talking to a Communist or meeting a Communist. I believe in democracy and in my inward power to work for democracy and to make it seem worth while to other people, and for that reason I am not afraid, and I don't want you to be afraid. I want you to make this country a land where we do not live under fear, and where we work to make life worth living.

CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS	481
EDITORIALS:	
THEY CRY WAR	483
KEEPING DOWN PRICES	484
FROM POLL TO POLL	484
JAPAN'S SOFT ANSWER	485
THE LAW AND MARTIN DIES by Freda Kirchwey	486
THE JOADS ON STRIKE by Carey McWilliams	488
WAR DIVIDES MEXICO by Harry Block	490
FRANCE AT ITS BEST by Alexander Werth	493
PROPAGANDA'S GOLDEN AGE by Max Lerner	495
FROM A EUROPEAN DIARY by Emil Ludwig	497
IN THE WIND	498
ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard	499
BOOKS AND THE ARTS:	
THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? by I. F. Stone	500
DEFENSE IN A VACUUM by Lindsay Rogers	501
THE TRADITIONS AND HENRY MILLER by Paul Rosenfeld	502
DEATH OF A SOLDIER by Philip Rahv	503
RADIO ROUND BY ROUND by Marcus Duffield	504
THE BURNING ORACLE by Mark Van Doren	504
DRAMA: BRAVE NEW WORLD! by Joseph Wood Krutch	505
RECORDS by B. H. Haggin	506

Editor and Publisher
FREDA KIRCHWEY

Managing Editor ROBERT BENDINER
Literary Editor MARGARET MARSHALL

Associate Editors
KEITH HUTCHISON MAXWELL S. STEWART I. F. STONE

Assistant Editor
JAMES WECHSLER

Dramatic Critic
JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

•

Business Manager and Director of Circulation
HUGO VAN ARX

Advertising Manager
MURIEL C. GRAY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Joads on Strike

BY CAREY McWILLIAMS

Los Angeles, October 29

FOR the first time since 1933 cotton pickers are on strike throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Accompanied by the usual employer violence and intimidation, the strike is valley-wide. To understand its causes, it is necessary to retrace the events leading up to October 1.

Large-scale cotton production is relatively new in California. In 1921 there were only 1,500 acres in cotton; by 1937, a "wildcat" year, a peak of 700,000 acres was planted. Since then the acreage has decreased, the figure for this year being about 331,000. Although the California production is still relatively insignificant, about 4 per cent of the total national production, cotton is tending to move westward into the irrigated sections of Arizona and California. The average yield per acre in California is about 600 pounds—almost three times the average for the nation. And while in the period 1933-36 218 man-hours of labor were required to produce a bale of cotton for the nation, in California only 126 man-hours were required. In other words, three times as much cotton per acre can be produced in California with about one-half the number of man-hours per bale. The California growers contend that these advantages are offset by their higher production costs and land valuations, but actually only acreage costs are higher in California. It costs less per bale to produce cotton in California than it does in the nation as a whole.

An efficiency-and-cost study of California cotton production made in 1938 for Kern County by the Extension Service of the University of California indicated that, with 1938 cotton prices, the growers derived an average income of $21.46 per acre. This income included certain payments received under the Triple A program but not soil-conservation payments. The total soil-conservation and parity payments for one county in California—Madera County—will this year amount to approximately $950,000. On a 500-acre ranch all of which would have been planted in cotton but for the AAA program government benefit payments this year would amount to as much as $4,684. This figure assumes, of course, full compliance, that is, that the grower would plant only 255 acres in cotton. The growers insist on construing the government payments as "rent" for the land not planted to cotton. But this land does not have to remain fallow.

On April 13, 1926, the growers in the San Joaquin Valley established the Agricultural Labor Bureau. This bureau—occupying joint offices with the Associated Farmers of Fresno County—is the agency through which labor is recruited and wage rates are fixed. The Arizona growers have a similar agency in Phoenix called the Farm Labor Service. For many years the growers have been accustomed to meet in Fresno in advance of the cotton-chopping and cotton-picking season, and in the name of the Labor Bureau to fix a so-called "base" rate for these labor operations. The growers contend that the rate is only a "base," and in no sense a maximum, rate, but in actual practice it tends to become the prevailing rate. A minority of growers who might feel inclined to pay more are reluctant to do so once the rate-fixing mechanism has become operative. It offers all growers an alibi: they can say that they are paying the "going" rate, "what everyone else is paying." The unfairness of this procedure is obvious. It is tantamount to asking the individual destitute migrant family in the San Joaquin Valley to bargain, not with an individual grower, but with the entire industry organized for this purpose.

The increase in cotton acreage in California has been the major factor attracting dust-bowl migrants to California. These migrants at present constitute perhaps 80 per cent of the total number of migratory workers in the state (estimated at 200,000). The growers in general would rather employ the newly arrived transients than local labor. The reasons, of course, are obvious. The migrant from outside the state usually has no resources whatever and will work for any wage that is offered. The result has been, of course, that the relief loads of the rural counties in California have mounted to staggering totals since 1933. The newly arrived transient family soon discovers that it cannot eke out an existence following the crops. During the first year of residence the family receives aid from the Farm Security Administration. After legal residence has been acquired, the family will usually be found on the rolls of the State Relief Administration. This system has certain advantages for the growers. Relief funds are provided by indirect taxation in California, by state and not by county taxes. Therefore the amount spent for relief in the rural counties is primarily provided by the large urban areas. In past years the State Relief Administration has, at the demand of the growers, always suspended relief during the harvest season, thereby flooding the labor market with thousands of workers. The intimacy of the relations which formerly existed between the SRA and the growers is indicated by the fact that Harold Pomeroy, who was in charge of the State Relief Admin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

istration under Governor Merriam, is now executive secretary for the Associated Farmers of California. The great influx of dust-bowl migrants has, naturally, undermined the earnings of the experienced migratory worker, shortened the duration of labor operations, and decreased annual earnings. The operation of the system has involved a direct subsidy by the state to the large-scale corporate farming interests which dominate California agriculture.

Governor Culbert L. Olson abhors this system. He is committed to the idea of eliminating "industrial peonage" in California. In May of this year he ordered the Commission of Immigration and Housing to hold a public wage-rate hearing in Madera County and to recommend a fair wage for cotton chopping. The SRA then refused to cut people off relief unless they were paid the recommended rate. In April of this year I visited the cotton camps and reported to the Governor that there would certainly be a strike in cotton picking this fall. Most of the camps at that time, no employment being available, were about 60 per cent occupied. With no place else to go, the workers had been stranded there after cotton picking ceased in December. The temper of the workers was running high even then, and the camps beggared description: they must be seen, and smelled, to be appreciated. In order to avert a strike if possible the Governor ordered another wage-rate hearing, this time designating a wage board of seven members, with the farming interests represented. The board held an open hearing in the valley on September 28 and later filed a report. Unfortunately it was divided: a majority of four recommended a formula for the guidance of the SRA; the other three, including myself, recommended $1.25 a hundred pounds as a fair wage scale. The growers had of course met in advance of the season and fixed a wage rate of 80 cents—no labor representation whatever was at the meeting. The Associated Farmers, although they were invited to attend, boycotted the wage board's hearing. Every member of the board, including the president of the State Grange and the president of the Farm Bureau Federation, joined in denouncing the wage-fixing procedure of the growers and agreed that it inevitably provoked friction in that it prompted the workers to meet and fix an offsetting rate. The wage hearing delayed the strike a week or ten days, but when the growers failed to increase the rate, the workers acted.

To appreciate the unfairness of the 80-cent rate, one needs a few figures. An experienced cotton picker cannot pick on an average more than 200 pounds of cotton a day, and he does not work every day. Fog causes delay; rain will postpone picking. At 80 cents a hundred, working six days a week, a cotton picker would theoretically earn $9.60 a week. Out of this he must pay his own transportation, buy his own cotton bag, and, usually, purchase supplies from a company store. Most of the growers provide cabins; a few furnish wood and water. There is no uniformity of practice about the perquisites supplied. The average family on relief in the San Joaquin Valley consists of four persons; the average state-relief allowance for a family of this size is about $43.45 a month. But this budget assumes that the worker is idle—not working ten hours a day in a cotton field. Moreover, a family on relief can obtain allowances for medical care and emergencies. Thus at 80 cents a hundred, the cotton picker could not possibly make the equivalent of his relief budget. Living costs are high in California compared with other cotton-producing areas, and workers simply cannot live on the 80-cent rate.

Cotton pickers in general are not organized in California. The C. I. O. has a field workers' union, but it is not strong. Knowing its weakness, it used every effort to avert a strike. The Workers' Alliance, however, is strong in rural counties. Every effort was made by the workers to avoid provocation. But the Associated Farmers were out to start trouble. In the town of Madera a large mob of vigilantes met in the War Memorial Auditorium practically under the eyes of the sheriff—ironically, the sheriff is W. O. Justice, known to the workers as "With-Out" Justice—and set plans in motion to raid strike headquarters and to disrupt a meeting in the public park. In breaking up the meeting, they went into action under the very eyes of the Governor's special representative and with two representatives of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee also looking on. (One of the latter received minor injuries and was treated at the hospital.) Workers have been evicted from cabins; the usual fake "plants" have been carried out, such as setting fire to cotton trucks and endeavoring to fix responsibility on the workers; and the usual arrests have been made. In short, the same old story has been repeated, with only a few noticeable differences. For one thing, the California State Employment Service, under recent rulings of the Social Security Board, is prevented from making referrals to strike areas. This automatically prevents the SRA from sending workers into the area and is a definite check on strike-breaking.

This year, partly owing to the wage hearing, a strong body of public opinion, even in the San Joaquin Valley, supports the strike. Governor Olson has announced that, if necessary, he will call out the National Guard to protect civil liberties in the strike area. Naturally he hesitates to take this action and will only do so as a last alternative. Present indications are that the strike will be settled, with the growers paying $1 a hundred. Had they offered this rate, which they can well afford to pay, at the outset of the season, there would have been no strike. In any event, Senator La Follette's young men have been thoroughly initiated into the ritual of the Associated Farmer technique in labor disputes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

War Divides Mexico

BY HARRY BLOCK

Mexico City, October 16

A SUPERFICIAL observer of the effects of the war on Mexico might be moved to remark that the only tangible result thus far has been that one of the afternoon papers has risen to the dignity of a second edition. Under the surface, of course, real changes are taking place; the progress of the Presidential campaign during the coming months will probably reveal just how deeply the pre-war alignment of forces has been disturbed. But in its everyday aspects Mexico City, at least, presents no greatly altered countenance. If the newspapers were filled with Nazi propaganda prior to the war, they still are; all movie theaters have a fair sprinkling of applause, in proportion to the social position of their patronage, for the appearance of Hitler on the screen, and in the more expensive cinema palaces the newsreels of the bombardment of Warsaw brought down the house. There is nothing surprising in this; it merely proves once more that the Mexican middle class is largely anti-democratic, pro-fascist, and, since Roosevelt came into office, anti-gringo.

There is a paradox here. Traditionally, it has been the poor people of Mexico who have nurtured the country's instinctive anti-imperialism. The landholding aristocrats welcomed Maximilian and the French, just as the wealthy bourgeoisie which flourished under the Díaz dictatorship allied itself with the agents of foreign economic penetration at whose tables it fed. Now it is the new middle class, usurping the place of the former financially dominant groups, which finds the worker-and-peasant connotations developed by the Mexican revolution of the last thirty years extremely distasteful. It tried unsuccessfully to bring the popular upheaval to a halt at least ten years ago, and fear of the masses has since made it an easy prey to fascist propaganda. In Calles's time Mexican reactionaries were able to count on American pressure to help them hold the Mexican people in check, but the radical-reform aspects of Roosevelt's New Deal have thrown these reactionaries into a state of mind bordering on panic. Feeling themselves abandoned by Washington, they began to turn their eyes abroad, where Hitler and Mussolini were demonstrating the latest wrinkles in the art of stifling popular aspirations.

It is this reversal of roles which explains the bitter anti-Americanism of the Mexican commercial press, just as it explains the efforts of the labor movement to promote better relations with the United States. During the successive war crises of the past three years and the ominous advance of fascism throughout the world, this paradox has deepened. When the war finally broke out, the Mexican reactionaries, who had jubilantly hailed the Munich pact last year, took up their expected position on the side of Hitler. The labor movement denounced the war as a new imperialist conflict for redivision of the world, but it also branded fascism as the chief foe and even advocated Mexican participation if the United States should become involved, a development which it believes must sooner or later occur.

The government necessarily strives to achieve a middle ground between strict neutrality and overt partisanship. Its sympathies are firmly engaged on the anti-fascist side, as its record on Ethiopia, Spain, and the other countries swallowed up in the fascist offensive attests. Nevertheless, the obvious duty of the government is to seek to derive every possible advantage from the circumstances of inter-imperialist conflict, a purpose for which, ideally considered, strict neutrality is perhaps the best course. This was the Carranza policy in the last war. After 1917 it earned him the reputation of pro-Germanism for his efforts to play off German imperialism against American; this was rash, in view of the comparative distances from Mexico of Washington and Berlin, but it was characteristic of Carranza's didactic romanticism whenever issues affecting Mexico's abstract autonomy were at stake. Cárdenas is at once more flexible and more realistic. He has proclaimed Mexican neutrality and is taking what steps he can to advance Mexico's economic and political position to the extent that the war provides him with opportunities. But he has also followed the American lead in the Declaration of Panama, thereby calling down on his head the wrath both of those who adhere to the Carranza doctrine and see in this action no more than an abject surrender to Yankee ambitions for domination of the Americas, and of the reactionaries who mask their real purpose to offer aid to the fascists behind the same "anti-imperialist" argument.

All the obscurities of the confused European situation are more or less faithfully reflected here. Is it really a democratic war against fascism? Is it, in fact, really a war at all? Labor, at least, was in the beginning ready to believe both, but it has since been developing considerable skepticism. The quick collapse of the Polish army and government gave birth to the opinion that Poland was merely a pawn in the game of the British and French imperialists, alive at last to the threat of Nazi expansionism to their own shaky empires. The subse-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quent Soviet occupation of White Russia and the Polish Ukraine, with all the imponderables latent in the Russian-German pact, subjected Mexican politics to a violent shake-up.

Up to the outbreak of the war, the political alignment of the country was clearly determined; in its broad outlines it still remains unchanged, but there has been a significant blurring of the edges. The two principal candidates for the presidency, Generals Manuel Avila Camacho and Juan Andreu Almazán, had polarized the social forces: a progressive alliance, including labor, the peasant federation, an apparent majority of the army, and many other groups within the P. R. M. (Party of the Mexican Revolution), supported Camacho, while the reactionary coalition, made up of big business, the chambers of commerce, landowners, retrograde militarists, and the Nazi-directed anti-Semitic gangs, with the tacit blessing, and possibly funds, of foreign capital and the Catholic church, boomed Almazán.

The campaign program of the first group boiled down to support for the Cárdenas government and a continuation and consolidation of its policies during the next Presidential term. The second group has still been unable to compose its conflicting internal rivalries, and its numerous attempts to unify the opposition parties into a single federation with a single candidate—Almazán—have so far been unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the general aims of its members are clear enough, even if Almazán's statement of them has been marked by a certain strategic evasiveness: a curb on labor; sapping of the agrarian reform by a return to parcelization of *ejido* grants among individual microscopic proprietors; a retreat on the oil question and settlement on their own terms with the oil companies; "guaranties" (read: protection from taxes and labor troubles) to foreign capital; "friendly relations with all countries," a euphemism for closer ties with the fascist states and recognition of Franco's Spain; educational freedom for the obscurantist and medieval Mexican church; and a war on native "communism."

Naturally, this program was duck soup for the middle class. In essence, it is an invitation to turn the Mexican clock back all the way to the coup d'état of Victoriano Huerta in 1913. The Cárdenas regime, according to Almazán, is "a boss rule a thousand times worse than that of Díaz." Casting himself in the role of a new Francisco Madero, he is again ready, he announces, to devote his life as in 1909 to the overthrow of an iniquitous tyranny. This piece of impudence has a certain grotesque humor which could be better appreciated if there were space here for an account of his career. Perhaps it is enough to say that he served in Huerta's regime and thus became an accessory to the murder of Madero (he had himself rebelled against the Madero government in 1911); that from 1914 to 1920 he consistently fought the revolutionary movement led by Carranza and opposed the new Constitution adopted in 1917; and that when he finally entered the Obregón wing of the revolution in 1920, it was apparently only for what he could get out of it. He is reputed to be one of the richest men in Mexico.

Almazán's past has been dredged up and broadcast by his opponents, but it may be doubted that the exposé is doing much to damage his reputation with his more fervent admirers, on whose brief memories he can confidently rely. The disheartening fact is that the new generation of the rising middle class is unconscious of its enormous debt to the revolution, has had little first-hand experience of the movement, is ignorant of its origins, hostile to its purposes, and frantically opposed to Cárdenas, its present leader. Their answer to the charge that Almazán is another Huerta is in essence: so what? And it is from this group that Almazán is drawing the majority of what might be termed his bona fide following, as distinguished from the horde of hungry racketeers that so liberally adorn his campaign committees.

The extreme right-wing backers of Almazán have found the war a process of disenchantment. Nearly their whole stock in trade had been a dutiful shouting of slogans learned by rote from pamphlets generously distributed by German emissaries. Hitler, they had been trying to persuade Mexico to believe, was Europe's—and America's—firmest bulwark against the red menace; now the ground has been cut from under their feet by their idol's new friendship with the "Bolshevik czar." A comic scramble ensued among the Nazi spokesmen to dissociate themselves from the Hitler label: one of their chief "theorists" has been driven so far as to argue that all the political ideologies which have given rise to the great "myths" of mankind—monarchy, democracy, communism, national socialism, fascism, etc.—are now irretrievably dead, and that the human race will have to wander through the valley of darkness for an indeterminate period until a new *mythos* is evolved, universal enough to make life again tolerable.

The other side of the medal has created difficulties on the left. Lombardo Toledano's C. T. M. (Confederation of Mexican Workers) has in the past often had to face charges of "Moscow gold" because it subscribed to policies, such as the popular front and collective security, of which the Soviet Union was the foremost exponent. In common with other labor and progressive organizations throughout the world which have followed the same line, it has been placed in an extremely awkward position. Some of the right-wing and opportunist elements of the C. T. M.—fortunately a minority—show signs of cracking under the strain, and they may yet give the Lombardo leadership some serious headaches.

Lombardo has been away from Mexico City on organization business and has not yet made any statement on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia. However, the issue cannot be indefinitely postponed. There have already been several abortive attempts in Congress to secure suppression of the Communist Party. The real nature of these efforts is clearly to find an opening wedge for an attack on the C. T. M. The labor daily, *El Popular,* no longer the official organ of the C. T. M. but completely identified with it in the public mind, has prudently adopted a non-committal policy, refraining from editorial comment on European events and appealing to Mexican labor to preserve its internal unity for the national struggle against fascism.

Within the P. R. M. a certain restiveness begins to be visible. Many of its politicos are none too enamored of the socialist theory to which they nominally subscribe; there will be a tendency among them to seize on what is being called by the press "Stalin's betrayal of socialism" as a pretext for ridding themselves of lip-service to an embarrassing ideal. (Incidentally this fidelity of the fascist press to the purity of Marxist doctrine is one of the more ludicrous developments since the war.) The logical end of such a tendency would be the undermining of the labor movement, the greatest single force in holding the revolution to its generally progressive direction. How far this current has gone, and what open schisms, if any, it is likely to provoke, may become known at the P. R. M. national convention next month.

If the democratic coalition can be held together in spite of these latent threats, the election of Camacho next July is practically assured. Cárdenas has promised, and gives every indication of abiding by his word, that the elections will be free. This has not prevented his enemies from raising the cry of "imposition," and they will doubtless claim fraud after the elections are over. The accusation is lent a certain color by the fact that Camacho has so far proved to be an indifferent and uninspiring campaigner, although it should not be forgotten that Cárdenas himself made an equally poor impression during the early stages of his prenomination campaign in 1933. But the charge is hollow, even though it is perfectly true that imposition has been the normal pattern of most Mexican elections. It is being advanced this early in the game to justify the uprising on which the opposition is banking, should its candidate lose. One of the reasons, in fact, for its failure to round up the entire reactionary crew in Almazán's support is probably the fear that he will not go all the way with them and will run out when the pinch comes; in view of his record, there would appear to be some basis for this suspicion. He and his advisers are fully aware that the numerically weak middle class cannot possibly win him the election, and his "popular" support is virtually confined to the former labor czar, Luis N. Morones, whose indorsement would be a liability to any candidate. Their only hope for a peaceful victory is to make a serious breach in the P. R. M. and to bring large sections of labor and the party over to their side. At present this seems a remote possibility, in spite of the confusion and cross-purposes which the war may engender. And a rebellion could succeed only on the premise of a sudden rise of reactionary sentiment in the United States strong enough to upset the whole present balance of Washington's policy toward Latin America.

Economically, Mexico stands on the verge of a new boom which may soon fully develop unless it is hamstrung, for political reasons, by business itself. I have in the past written of the earnest hope in opposition breasts that Cárdenas and all his works might be buried under an economic depression; the crisis that set in after the oil expropriation seemed made to order for this purpose. That the remains of this crisis are now almost wholly artificial is shown by the tendency of business to pick up whenever its practitioners give it half a chance.

Trade has been temporarily dislocated by the curtailment of imports from Europe and by uncertainties about future prices, but this situation will probably soon be clarified; a large part of the former European trade will naturally be diverted to the United States. The position of the peso has greatly improved—it has risen from six to the dollar on September 1 to 4.85 this week—and the prospect of increased exports of oil, minerals, and other raw materials may induce further improvement. Illogically, internal prices, particularly of foodstuffs, continue to soar in response to the speculators' field day that has defeated all efforts of the past five years to bring the national economy into some kind of balance. Living standards are being depressed and labor wage gains wiped out as a result. More serious still, industry itself is a victim of the speculative orgy, apart from the political capital it derives from it, since the masses of the population are unable to spend any large proportion of their wages on consumer goods other than foodstuffs. Until and unless government action begins to make a real dent in the price level, it is unlikely that the country will be able to take the fullest advantage of the opportunities opened up by the war. Renewed labor unrest due to falling real wages may soon break the industrial truce that has lasted since the oil expropriation; a major strike wave would further impede industrial expansion and permit employers to complain, to good effect, that "business confidence is being killed."

From this viewpoint, it is clear that the C. T. M. policy of combating high prices and speculation, without, if it can be avoided, unleashing a new strike offensive, and of striving to prevent differences of opinion on European affairs from disrupting labor unity, is essentially sound. Labor remains the key to the political struggle. Good generalship and an undivided army can insure the victory of the working people of Mexico over the atavistic forces led by Almazán.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

France at Its Best

BY ALEXANDER WERTH

I AM not writing this from Paris, but from Glasgow. Having suffered some damage in a road smash during my summer vacation in July, I spent August and the first weeks of the war in a Glasgow bed, with no direct contact with reality except one of those barrage balloons which I could see from my window. These balloons are supposed to protect the Clyde docks and shipyards from accurate hits. As it swayed in the wind and turned its ugly elephant face at me, it seemed to be laughing at the newspaperman who was missing in this absurd way the beginning of his biggest story.

However, I am returning to Paris next week. It will be sad to return to Paris; for nearly everybody I know has been mobilized. All the younger men—all my French colleagues, left, right, Communist, everybody—have been called up; so have my landlord in the Boulevard Arago and his two brothers; so has the podgy ironmonger round the corner who wears goggles on his peaky little nose, and who has a wife and a little girl of seven; so has the green grocer who is so obviously in love with his young wife (both have the same childish giggle—and how foolishly they giggled whenever I told them that war was coming!); the curly-haired fellow behind the counter in the *bureau de tabac* must also have been called up, and the waiters in all the cafes and restaurants I frequent. All gone. The only man who may still be in my neighborhood is the one-eyed plumber; he lost his eye in the last war. And even he may be attached to some auxiliary service unless they find him quite useless; in which case he may have gone home to his village to fish all the day long—his constant ambition—or he may be waiting in Paris for the plumbing jobs that will result from the air raids. Even the politicians have not been spared. The other day I got a note from one of my deputy friends:

Chambre des Députés, September 10

MON CHER AMI: In spite of this notepaper I am not writing you from the Chamber, and not even from Paris. I have joined my regiment of Algerian fusiliers, and if you come out as a war correspondent I hope you will spot me under my tin helmet.

Yours ever, P. O. L.

The note was strangely moving in its brevity and simplicity. Here was France at its best—accepting this war as something necessary and inevitable, and ready to fight it to the end.

Everybody mobilized! You can scarcely realize what it means. The French people are not accepting this war with any bravado or mock heroics; it is the slightly lesser of two fearful evils—one, vassalage, that is, the total destruction of France; the other, the partial destruction of France, a partial destruction from which it may take many years to recover. "Le Français se fait rare," the famous playwright and novelist Giraudoux recently wrote in a significant book called "Pleins Pouvoirs." The Frenchman in Europe today is becoming a comparatively rare human specimen: there are only forty million Frenchmen as against eighty million Germans; and there is some sad irony in the thought that only a few weeks before the war broke out the Daladier government passed a large batch of decrees tending to increase the French birth rate. The average Frenchman, who had usually been flippant about such matters, was beginning, perhaps for the first time, to take a solemn view of the whole birth-rate problem; the population question, on which the future of France and French civilization ultimately depends, was beginning to be treated with an earnestness one had never seen in France before. The widespread Catholic revival and the vogue of Charles Péguy —who was killed on the Marne in September, 1914, and through whose writings there runs the constant refrain, *Il faut que France continue*—were the psychological counterpart of the government's action in dealing with the population problem. In the last war France lost nearly one and a half million men. It was a sincere and weighty French argument a year ago—"we cannot waste the youth of France on Czechoslovakia." It was the biggest French pro-Munich argument. But today the French people know that it is not a case of "wasting" French lives on Poland or any other foreign country, that the choice lies between the two evils already mentioned—vassalage and war. The millions who have gone to the front know that only one choice was possible. France will not waver, and will not be impressed by German propaganda.

What this propaganda is we all know. It consists in saying that Britain is spoiling the chances of a happy Franco-German understanding; that this is England's war. The argument no longer cuts any ice, not since conscription was introduced in England—a measure which filled French hearts with gladness. And yet it is important, if France is not to lose heart in the dark days of the war that lie ahead, that Frenchmen be as conscious as in the latter days of the last war of the comradeship in arms between them and the British, that they be tangibly aware that the maximum effort is being made by both countries—in all fields. A pressing question

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

asked in letters I get from France is: "How many troops are you sending over, and how soon?" For in the first phase of the war the most decisive battles will be fought on land. The economic battle, the battle of the sea, can be decisive only at a later stage when Germany's economic stores are exhausted. Not that the French want us to sacrifice quality to speed; they know that it is both merciless and useless to send untrained men to the front.

If such questions are asked, it is because France knows that this war, more even than the last war, is a life-and-death struggle for France and Britain. If we had lost the last war we should have been compelled to sign a treaty many times worse than the Treaty of Versailles; but we should not have disappeared as independent nations. This time we should—with "protectors" established in London and Paris.

Till the last moment France hoped that war was not "absolutely" inevitable, that some attempt might yet be made to reach a compromise over Danzig. On September 2, after war had already broken out in Poland, at least two men in the government still looked hopefully to Mussolini and tried to delay the ultimatum to Germany. Mr. Chamberlain's embarrassment in the House of Commons that Saturday night was apparently due to these hesitations in Paris. Such last-moment and even after-the-last-moment hesitations were perhaps only human and natural; but there was no choice, and Daladier knew it all along. Since last December he has known what was coming; his speech of June 27, before Parliament rose for the summer vacation, was more tragic in tone than any other of his I had heard. "He is anxious to get us out of the way and wants to scare us," some of the deputies remarked. I remember that speech very clearly, and at no moment did I have the impression that it was a parliamentary maneuver. I felt that the man was speaking from his heart, and that he knew what all this would mean to every French home and to that *jeunesse française* which, instead of taking advantage of the marriage and "large-family" allowances provided in his new decrees, would once again be sent to the north and the east to fight more Verduns, so that the fairest land in the world should not be turned into a "protectorate" and a vast concentration camp. *Il faut que France continue,* Charles Péguy wrote before being killed on the Marne. Today his sons are fighting the same battle. It is a tragic continuity—a continuity of death.

The French attitude toward Russia is in the main hostile, and the French government has started its drive against the Communist leaders, some of whom are still preaching Stalinist "pacifism." The view held by Pertinax and a few others that the interests of Germany and Russia are fundamentally hostile is giving way to the rather less pleasant theory of the ideological kinship between Nazidom and Stalinism. The Hitler-Stalin pact has resulted in the disappearance of the Communist Party as a political force in France. Its strength, particularly in the 1936

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

election, when it assembled 1,500,000 votes, lay in its dynamic anti-fascism. Today it means nothing. And the ex-Communist voter fails to understand why so popular a leader as Maurice Thorez, who had always maintained that "he was not taking his line from Moscow," failed to do the one obvious thing the day the Hitler-Stalin pact was announced—which was to resign from the Communist Party and dissociate himself from the Third International. Had he done that, he would still be the leader of the profoundly patriotic French working class.

Propaganda's Golden Age

BY MAX LERNER

1. Freedom in the Opinion Industry

LIKE other Americans I get letters from Europe that have always the same note: Europe is doomed; can a free society survive in America? It is now fashionable to answer Yes. The new note in speeches, books, and editorials is either "the coming victory of democracy" note or the "America is different" note. A native democratic élan is excellent, but, aside from the fact that every exhorter uses democracy in a different sense, it has thus far been left largely in the realm of exhortation. The New Deal program has bogged down not only because of its own lack of plan and cohesion, not only because of the bitter opposition of its enemies, but also because of the sabotage of those who should have been its friends—the very liberals who have been whipping themselves to new fervor in defense of the democratic principle.

If we are honest with ourselves we will not blink the fact that we are entering one of the blackest crisis periods in our history. Whoever is elected in 1940, the outlook is bearish from any humanist angle. Already budgets are being cut, taxes eased for big enterprise, labor-protective legislation repealed, new labor-smashing laws introduced, strikes met with repression, educational expenditures whittled away, alien-baiting and red-baiting measures passed—and all while we engage in top-flight oratory about making democracy work. I have been reading a recent history of criminal-syndicalism legislation after the World War, and the story is a grim one. But nothing in the palmiest days of Palmer, Lusk, and the Centralia hysteria can equal the new tidal wave of reaction that is descending upon us. From Boston to San Francisco, from the Mexican border to Madison, there are ungentle preparations being made by corporate capitalism to take over just as soon as the New Deal has relaxed its grip.

I do not say this to register myself on the Jeremiah rolls. I say it because the fact that the once advancing democratic armies in America are now in full retreat is a fact that needs explaining. The current explanations run in terms either of "the swing of the pendulum" or of "the tyranny of words." But pendular theories are only a polite way of saying: "I don't know, but I won't admit it." And before words can have the power to become tyrants, the minds of people must be prepared for the tyranny through demoralization. My own belief is that the turning-point in that demoralization came with the 1937 "recession." The reactionary press campaign, which had reached a fierce intensity during the 1936 elections without showing any marked effect on them, was now resumed with a much greater probability of success. The masses had voted for Mr. Roosevelt not for any sophisticated reasons but because he had reached them by the propaganda of the deed—the actual accomplishments of the New Deal. They had caught the contagion of his assurance and felt that, whatever happened, he would be master of the occasion. But such a sense of confidence could not survive a new and drastic depression. The Roosevelt image lost much of its magic, and it became easy for the Coughlins and Gerald Winrods and Fritz Kuhns and their fellow-travelers to marshal their forces effectively on the battleground of opinion.

We are in the midst of a sharp struggle over opinion, and there is a sharper one still to come. Everyone feels a swing of the country's mood to the right—a swing well engineered and maneuvered. The pattern itself is clear: anti-Semitic (Coughlin, Kuhn, and eight-hundred-odd fascist organizations), anti-labor and vigilantist (Ford, Girdler, Associated Farmers), red-baiting (Dies, the Catholic hierarchy), anti-alien (the xenophobes in Congress and out), anti-democratic (all of them). What is not so clear is how far the swing will go before it is checked, and what is likely to check it. One answer is that a direct grappling with the problems of unemployment and shrinking capital investment will check it. And it is a good answer—if it can be translated into reality.

In short, we are in what may be ironically called a new Golden Age of propaganda. The last Golden Age came with the discovery and spread of advertising technique, the revelations in the army intelligence tests of the low level of popular thinking, and the underscoring the World War gave to the irrational character of all political thinking. The new Golden Age, using all that, has added to it the control—either by a state monopoly or by a class monopoly—of the channels and sources of opinion, and their systematic exploitation for state or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

class ends. As Harold Lasswell says, "A new skill group has come into existence in modern civilization . . . skill in propaganda has become one of the most effective roads to power in modern states." And that propaganda skill is at the service of those who are ruthless enough to use it and can pay for it.

As there is a new Golden Age of propaganda, so also there is a new Unholy Alliance in the winning and maintaining of power. There was once a phrase that passed current among historians—"the barons of the bags and the barons of the crags." There are groups in every culture today corresponding to these—and the unholy alliance is between them. The barons of the bags are the holders of economic power, acting through their government and dependent upon it. The barons of the crags are the newspaper publishers and editors, the masters of the radio, the propagandists, the back-stage manipulators of opinion—those who occupy the strategic passes to the castles of the mind and exact their heavy toll.

The vast new fact that is emerging out of the struggle for majority rule is that our fates are currently being determined by two sorts of minority strategy. A few men within the political governing group make decisions that condition the destiny of peoples. Nothing is clearer than that Chamberlain's whole appeasement policy was dictated by the fear that the defeat of Hitler and the collapse of fascist prestige would mean a genuine democratic victory throughout Europe. And the important thing is that he was able so to play on the fear of war of the English people that they accepted this appeasement policy; and then, when Hitler's territorial ambitions turned west rather than east, Chamberlain was able to play upon the English instinct for survival and modify his appeasement policy even to the extent of introducing conscription and finally going to war. Moreover, nothing could be clearer than that Czechoslovakia would have chosen to fight rather than be absorbed if a few men in the governing group had not preferred German domination to the acceptance of Soviet aid. One of them expressed it: "I would rather be invaded by Hitler than helped by Stalin"; and the important thing is that he was able to make his own personal preference override the exactly opposite preference of millions.

What happened yesterday in Spain and Czechoslovakia, what is happening today in England and France, may happen tomorrow in America. The Roosevelt government has weakened the hold of the Big Money group and has even succeeded in undermining the blind faith we once had in the barons of opinion, but it has not succeeded in controlling or displacing either group. They are still in control in the two strategic centers of American life. Their great weakness used to lie in their pathetic reliance upon money in the old sense—money to be used in buying power; and Chamberlain's government in England, with its cowardly betrayal of Spain to Franco and its bewildered hope that it could then buy Franco off by loans, is the classic illustration of this. But that is an old-fashioned and vestigial capitalist view. The new groups are today learning the subtler uses of money. They understand not only that money must be used very delicately and indirectly—behind the rhetoric of majority rule and the screen of a free press—to buy power, but also that power must be captured and retained in order to protect money. I should be greatly surprised if the economic groups behind the Chamberlain government ever allowed their kind of Cabinet—whether under Chamberlain or Halifax or Churchill or some essentially reactionary coalition—to be replaced by a genuinely democratic government, short of civil war. I should be equally surprised about France. Nor do I think a civil war will be necessary. In a time of confusion, when the big battalions of the majority are distracted and demoralized, the compact and ruthless storm troopers of opinion march in and take possession.

That is beginning to happen today in America. If the liberals do not know it yet they are blind. If they fail to act they are committing suicide.

How have they acted thus far to insure the survival of a free society? Whatever the contribution of the politicians and administrators, the contribution of the intellectuals seems to have been the fetishism of the principle. Many of them recognize the extent of fascist propaganda and the preparation of fascist terrorism in America today. Some of them even recognize the extent to which the formation of opinion in America today is a class monopoly, and the hopelessness of taking active measures for greater economic effectiveness and social well-being while that is true. Nevertheless, they persist in asserting that though the heavens may fall and the democratic state be destroyed, they will do nothing to qualify the principle of laissez faire in the opinion industries.

Of course, they do not see it quite that way. To them the realm of opinion-formation is not an industry but the sacred and untouchable province of the individual. They do not see that since Jefferson's day two things have happened that have wholly changed the conditions of freedom—first, the unremitting thrust of economic empire until it has subdued the political and the social unit of the corporate sway; second, the replacement of the free small newspaper by the mastodons of the press and radio, and the perfection of propaganda techniques to swell the power of those who control opinion.

The newspaper industry is one of the outstanding examples of the crowding out of the relatively free small enterprise by big capital. One reason why William Allen White is so tragic as well as so exciting a figure in modern journalism is that, as the editor and publisher of the Emporia (Kansas) *Gazette*, he stands for a world that was but that is no longer—stands for it with complete

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

integrity but with a final ineffectiveness. The huge independent newspaper, such as the New York *Times,* which could not be replaced or effectively met in competition except by an enormous capital investment; the newspaper chains, like those of Hearst, Scripps-Howard, Gannett, Paul Block; the powerful press associations, such as the Associated Press or the United Press; the special-feature syndicates; the new and powerful pictorial weeklies; the advertising agencies—these have left the William Allen Whites in splendid isolation, attractive but none the less museum pieces. The temper of this group may be judged by the fact that for seven years now it has been consistently anti-New Deal while a majority of the people have been consistently pro-New Deal. It may be judged even better by reading the speeches and resolutions at the last convention of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association—one that had every index of a convention of the right-wing Republicans after the dissenters among them had been expelled and only a rump was left. The fact is that these gentlemen express the interests and the sentiments of big enterprise not only because of advertisers' pressures, but basically because they are themselves big enterprise. We cheer when a J. David Stern attempts to break this solid phalanx as he did for a time with the New York *Post;* but the reason Stern failed was that no single individual alone can break the phalanx, so long as the rest remain solid. And while a Stern was trying to do that in New York, hundreds of cities and towns had only a single newspaper or several owned by the same company—with no competition of ideas in either case.

Given these conditions, it is idle to talk any longer of "freedom" of press and opinion as though it were synonymous with the absence of governmental intervention of any sort. The fact is that here, as in other industries dominated by big corporate enterprise, laissez faire has come to mean not the freedom of all but the tyranny of the few.

[*In the concluding part of this article, to appear in our next issue, Mr. Lerner will outline a plan for a "TVA in the Opinion Industry."*]

From a European Diary

BY EMIL LUDWIG

Locarno, October 2

WE OWE much to fascism. The swiftness with which it tries to master the world forces democracy to be equally quick. Its propaganda has made its enemies multiply their propaganda a hundred-fold. In a village near Tunis six weeks ago I saw a dozen natives drinking coffee and smoking, and listening attentively to the radio. My French friend said: "Until last year these people were fascists; they could hear their own language only in broadcasts from Rome." Fascist technicians have the same experience as all others: the inventor is soon overtaken by his competitors.

Moreover, the ether, being common to all, imposes a remarkable self-restraint upon the enemy. In peacetime several stations used to interrupt the Moscow radio, and also the other way round. Today, when thousands are being killed every hour, no station disturbs another, for each knows that would lead to the complete ruin of radio throughout the world. Each nation lets the other report its deeds. Now that even the Red Cross is shot at, the announcers are the last practical pacifists and the first citizens of a coming world—a world in which man will fight only with spiritual weapons.

October 5

The coming partition of Germany suggests that the German princes may be brought into the picture again. That would be a great error. They must be ruled out, not because we are hurrying into the middle of the twentieth century, but because for twenty years they have been without exception ignoble, that is, have shown themselves without any means of self-defense, and because in these twenty years they have not produced a single able representative. If a bold revolutionary were to be found in any one of the twenty-two princely houses, I should prefer such a prince to the corporal who has come up in the world. But where is such a one? Most of them are dull and lazy; the better-educated are decadent.

A short time ago I sat at table in Paris with one of the most talked-of pretenders. Herriot sat opposite him. The petty-bourgeois Frenchman discussed Beethoven with the son of a German king, and the latter fell into difficulty after difficulty. The scene presented a delightful impromptu on the theme of birth and talent, tradition and education.

The ridiculous futility of these princes' sons, none of whom have any ability, or knowledge, or aspiration—all are too foolish for that, or too rich, or both—is shown most strikingly in the very fact of Hitler. This plebeian, who has nothing in common with the princes but a lack of education, has destroyed their future among a people thoroughly inclined toward monarchy because he could at least make speeches and carry on intrigues and struggle passionately to rise.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That nothing can be done with the princes after Germany's defeat has this advantage—the country can be divided into two or three instead of twenty-two parts. To see Bismarck's work fall to pieces must be the wish now of even such an admirer as I have always been. I occupied myself with him for long years, I presented him three times to the public, and now, after ten years in which I had completely forgotten him, he suddenly appears to me as in the flesh. His work falls in ruins because Germans are less than even he with his skepticism supposed.

What he demanded of Germans would have been hard even for other peoples to fulfil. "Be united and strong," he said, "but do not covet world power." Bismarck, the last bulwark against imperialism, the man who for twenty years maintained peace in Europe by force and never tried to obtain colonies, believed openly that a lucky gambler should leave the game while he is winning and retire, if not to rest, at least to his broad world interests, and not again engage in great risks. William the Grandson spoiled this concept of grim and wise old age.

The first attempt at world power miscarried lamentably; the second is about to do so. Thus the old German precept will have been again demonstrated—that limited not heightened national power opens the way to free development of the great gifts of the German people. If Prussia is isolated and reduced to a third-class state, and the land south of the Main joined to Austria in some kind of *Ost-Reich,* the German genius will again unfold and astonish the world as it did when Germany was disrupted and incapable of governing itself.

Ceterum censeo Germaniam esse dividendam.

October 8

The noiselessness with which this war begins is affecting. In the region where its greatest battles may be expected armies are marching toward each other almost in silence. There has been no declaration of war on culture. Who in France today would propose a boycott of German music? (Of Wagner, yes, for he has turned out to be a high-political symbol of German world domination.)

A second difference between this and the last war I find in the divisions that cut across national lines. The foreign legions which are being formed everywhere to fight against the motherland—are they not a symbol of the anachronism of exalted national feeling? If all troops on both sides carried their own flag, as they used to do, and a Martian looked down at them through his opera glass, he would laugh and ask who really was fighting whom. But one must make a distinction. Under the German flag are enemies of Germany, compelled to fight; under the French flag there is no foe of France. As long as I have studied history, I have never found lasting victories won by the side that used compulsion.

In the Wind

WHEN CORRESPONDENTS in London got word of the sinking of the Courageous, the dispatches they immediately submitted were delayed for some time by the Ministry of Information. Asking for an explanation, they were told that although the story had spread like wildfire through London and everyone in key positions apparently knew it, the censor hadn't been informed of the catastrophe. He promised to investigate at once.

WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT over the Browder case exists inside the Department of Justice. According to well-informed sources, the department did not intend to push the case at the present time. At the President's request it was compiling material on passport violations as the basis for projected anti-espionage legislation, when the Dies committee got wind of its discoveries and popped the question to Browder. Browder confessed, and the department was forced to take action immediately.

A PROMINENT German psychologist has scored another point for the Nazi doctrine of race superiority. Writing in a German psychological journal, E. R. Jaensch asserts that the superiority of the Nordic race can be proved in the poultry yard: the Nordic chick is better behaved and more efficient in feeding than the Mediterranean chick, and less likely to overeat. This, he argues, also refutes the "liberal" claim that "race" differences are really cultural differences, since race differences among chicks can't be accounted for in cultural terms.

FRENCH NEWSPAPERS are full of white space denoting the censor's activity. The most tantalizing emptiness appeared in the *Lumière,* where the headline "Comments on the Suppression of the Communist Party" was followed by a long stretch of white space. But at the bottom there proudly appeared the by-line of the author—although every word of his piece had been eliminated.

TYPOGRAPHICAL TRAGEDIES: "The Chamberlain wing is said to favor organization of another anti-Comintern pact, based on the old lies and the remnants of the old anti-Comintern pact, which would mean Spain, Italy, and Japan" (from the Detroit *News*). . . . "*Amsterdam.* (A. P.) A twenty-five-year-old German military plot was interned by Netherlands authorities Wednesday . . ." (from the *Daily Oklahoman*).

TOLEDO'S RETIRING city manager, John Edy, was tendered a farewell banquet recently at a large hotel. Outside, 200 pickets, whose relief had been cut off allegedly because of Edy's ineptness, paraded with signs such as "Inside they feast; outside we starve." The Toledo *Blade* and the Toledo *Times* both gave space to the story of the banquet. Neither mentioned the pickets.

[*The $5 prize for the best item submitted during October goes to D. L. of St. Paul, Minnesota, for the story about Congressman Maas published last week.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

London, September 19

NOW that the full measure—or very nearly so—of Stalin's and Molotov's perfidy has been revealed, it must be pointed out that they did much more than stab Poland in the back and abandon the anti-dictator front. They dealt a deadly blow to their Communist movement, and to its friends at home and abroad, of which they will not hear the last for many a year. Many persons besides myself, without being themselves Communists, have wanted to see the Russian experiment tried out fairly and squarely. When I testified before the New York State Reconstruction Commission in 1919, I said that it seemed to me most fortunate that the Russians were ready to try a system which has been urged for mankind ever since human beings abandoned their communistic method of living in the earliest ages. I came back from Russia in 1929 deeply impressed by the extraordinary progress made in industry, on the farm, and in every walk of life, and thought it thrilling that a state was trying primarily to serve its workers and not its privileged classes. Ever since then my faith that communism was being fairly tried out in Russia has been waning. I could not believe that a government based on the ruthless dictatorship of one man, that had to be kept going by wholesale purges and by the starvation of millions of people, as in the Ukraine, could give communism the chance to show whether or not it was the way out of our decaying capitalism.

Now I am hopeless of any good coming out of the experiment. Three months after Molotov said that Russia was not going to desert the anti-aggressor front it joined the aggressors, and used the precise language of Hitler and Goebbels in so doing. The *Pravda* editorial which gave the show away might have been written in Berlin, or even lifted bodily out of one of Hitler's tirades. Today Molotov is congratulating the army on its "heroic deeds," these being its valiant march over a prostrate neighbor with whom Russia had signed a non-aggression pact. After all those fine speeches that Litvinov used to make at Geneva, speeches that I and *The Nation* frequently called the only civilized utterances in international politics, the Russian government has revealed itself as a common despoiler and robber. If any group in America again puts out a statement urging me and the rest of their fellow-citizens to think differently of the Russian dictatorship than of the others, I shall refuse most emphatically. It is not only just as bloody as the others, but just as crooked, treacherous, and criminal. At the very time that Litvinov was demanding that the League of Nations enforce sanctions against Mussolini for making war on Ethiopia, some of us called attention to the fact that the Russian government was calmly lining its pockets by selling gasoline to Italy for its planes and tanks. That, we now know, was the true measure of its sincerity and honesty.

I have heard many pacifist-minded Americans defend the great Russian armies on the ground that Russia had suffered so much from the military intervention without declaration of war of the United States, Japan, Great Britain, and the others that it was justified in preparing to defend its frontiers, especially after the appearance of Hitler. But when the Russian army began to number millions, I for one began to have my doubts, though it was only to be told that this great army was the one force that could possibly save democratic Europe from domination by Hitler and Mussolini. When the undeclared war in Mongolia began several years ago I found myself extremely disturbed, but I was assured that the guilt was solely Japan's and, moreover, that the diversion was helping China and so helping democracy. Then, after having thrown away heaven knows how many Russian lives, Stalin made peace with Japan, and abandoned China. And now he is rescuing the Polish minorities and forcing Latvia and Estonia to give him whatever of theirs he wants. Soon, I suppose, he will be taking Bessarabia away from Rumania. If Hitler wins the war, he and Stalin will divide the swag in Rumania precisely as they have done in Poland.

It is not certain to what extent Stalin has damaged the military prospects of the Allies. The British government is undoubtedly worried about what he actually proposes to supply Hitler. Some people think he will give a great deal of help; others are sure that he can deliver very little, and will ask a high price for whatever he contributes. One military expert with whom I have just talked thinks that Hitler, knowing the character of his fellow-criminal in Poland, will have to leave at least forty divisions there to prevent the Bear from walking in on him and to hold down the Poles. Stalin has four million men in arms! But whatever happens now, Stalin, I repeat, has dealt his cause a blow from which it will not recover for generations and has greatly strengthened the enemies of communism the world over.

[*Mr. Villard is now in Germany, but will not send us any articles on conditions there until he is outside the country.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS *and the* ARTS

The Chicken or the Egg?

THE BRITISH WAR BLUE BOOK. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.50.

HIS Majesty's Stationery Office is not the most objective observer of British policy, and the Blue Book it has issued on the origin of the war is history with its face lifted. Documents, like figures, never lie, but much depends on how one arranges them, and what one omits. These were chosen to support a thesis. "Now that all the relevant documents are being made public," Mr. Chamberlain said on September 1, "we shall stand at the bar of history knowing that the responsibility for this terrible catastrophe lies on the shoulders of one man—the German Chancellor. . . ." The crucial word is "relevant," and the Prime Minister was the judge of that. History may take a less simple view. In retrospect the war-guilt question may seem a variant of the riddle—which came first, the chicken or the egg? Hitler caused the war, but who "caused" Hitler? Britain's Tories share the final honors.

Der Führer has done his best to support the Chamberlain thesis, and it is he who supplies the Blue Book's most effective pro-British propaganda. The anthology of duplicity opens with Hitler's ten-year non-aggression pact with Pilsudski (January, 1934), and proceeds with a selection of the Führer's pledges and compliments to Poland. He thought the Poles "a great nationally conscious people" (May, 1935). It would be "unreasonable and impossible" to deny them an outlet to the sea (March, 1936). As late as last January Hitler felt there could "scarcely be any difference of opinion" on the value of his non-aggression pact with Poland. The cadavers of these past promises, laid out for inspection on the slabs of the Blue Book, are morbidly fascinating, though they will come as a revelation only in the more cobwebby corners of the House of Lords.

Less obvious are the Nazi tactics, of which the Blue Book provides a close-up. The Nazis have refined their methods far beyond the crass kicking of a man when he's down. The victim is not knocked down. He is persuaded to lie down. While Hitler administers the kicks, Goebbels shrieks for justice and the British stand by, advising the victim to remain "moderate and calm." The phrase appears over and over again in the dispatches. Nothing in this volume is more striking than Hitler's ability to cast himself in the role of the insulted and injured, and the time spent by the British begging Warsaw not to hurt his feelings.

The mystery is why Hitler chose to fight. The British seem to have been prepared to push the Polish fly into the German parlor if only the spider had been patient and decorous. It is significant that the only reference in this volume to the "territorial integrity" of Poland is in Roosevelt's message to Hitler and Moscicki. The British avoided the phrase. Chamberlain's formula was that aid would be given "in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish government accordingly considered it vital to resist." But Henderson's memorandum on his August 28 conference with the Führer and Ribbentrop shows that the British wanted the Nazis to know that London rather than Warsaw would decide what was a clear threat to Polish independence, that is, the limit of reasonable concessions to German demands. At the same interview Henderson not only offered Hitler Britain's friendship but said he personally did not exclude the possibility of an alliance between the two countries if the Polish question were settled peaceably. The next day Hitler felt encouraged enough to demand that a Polish emissary "with full powers" be sent to Berlin within twenty-four hours. An emissary with full powers to answer "yes" or "no" on the spot would have been in much the same position as Schuschnigg or Hacha. But in the frantic flurry of telegrams which followed, Halifax's first reaction was merely that it was "unreasonable to expect that we can produce a Polish representative in Berlin today." It was not until late in the day, after the Polish government had made it clear that "they would certainly sooner fight and perish rather than submit to such humiliation," that Halifax finally decided that Hitler's proposal was "wholly unreasonable."

Hitler was unwilling to help the British find a face-saving formula, or to take what he wanted piecemeal, as he did in Czechoslovakia. He denied that the demand for a Polish emissary in twenty-four hours constituted an ultimatum, but proceeded to act as though it did. The German troops were ordered to march even though the Poles, under British pressure, had accepted the principle of "direct discussions" and their ambassador was waiting to receive the German terms for a settlement. Hitler wanted not a new Munich but "a little war"; the latter had obvious advantages in terrorizing the next victim. The Russian agreement and Hitler's conviction that the British would not aid the Poles encouraged him to try. It is still too early to say that he was wrong. Agonized cries for help from Warsaw echo unanswered in the pages of the Blue Book. "Minister for Foreign Affairs has just telephoned to me in the middle of an air raid," British Ambassador Kennard telegraphed Halifax from Warsaw on September 1, "to beg me to point out to your Lordship that various cases of armed German aggression . . . cannot be taken longer as mere isolated cases but constitute acts of war." The next day Beck, pointing to widespread bombardment of non-military objectives by the Nazis, "very discreetly suggested it was essential that there should be some diversion as soon as possible in the west." Chamberlain, after a hesitation yet to be satisfactorily explained, finally declared war on September 3, but while Hitler dropped bombs on Warsaw the British dropped leaflets on the Reich.

The hammer-and-sickle, as well as the umbrella, is linked with the swastika in responsibility for the attack on Poland. As early as August 16 Henderson reported that the German State Secretary "seemed very confident, and professed to believe that the Russian assistance to the Poles would not only be entirely negligible, but that the U. S. S. R. would even in the end join in sharing in the Polish spoils." Had there been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an Anglo-Russian pact, Hitler would hardly have dared to attack Poland. Why there was no such pact will probably be the subject of further "Blue Books" from Moscow as well as London. This first of the series is full of vivid pictures: Göring's pride in Karinhall, Hitler's volatile temperament and curious concern with castration, Ribbentrop's aping of the Führer, the impatience with appeasement that reflects itself in the reports of the British ambassadors at Berlin and Warsaw as contrasted with the Foreign Office's persistence in trying for a respectable way out. One gets to know the upper-class Englishman in these pages and that quality which the non-English, not quite but almost fairly, call hypocrisy—the quality which enabled Chamberlain to talk of "good faith," Halifax to say that "the principle on which the British Empire is conducted is education in self-government," Henderson to tell Hitler that the British never break their word. This will make odd reading in Spain, India, and Czechoslovakia. Finally one may note the Nazi characteristic that did more than anything else to alienate their Tory friends. It was impossible to shut one's eyes to the fact that they weren't gentlemen. In Document No. 91 the Nazis complain to Henderson about the Poles. Henderson explains that the British "had constantly warned" the Poles against provocative action. "Herr von Ribbentrop replied that His Majesty's Government's advice had had cursed (*verflucht*) little effect. I mildly retorted," Henderson writes Halifax, "that I was surprised to hear such language from a Minister for Foreign Affairs." The bounder!

I. F. STONE

Defense in a Vacuum

OUR MILITARY CHAOS. By Oswald Garrison Villard. Alfred A. Knopf. $1.75.

IN HIS long and distinguished career as a publicist Oswald Garrison Villard has never pamphleteered on a more important, a more ominous, and, in a sense, a more neglected subject than the one with which he now deals: the increasing militarism of these United States. I say neglected not because writers ignore the subject, but because so few other people seem to be alarmed by the piling up of "defensive" weapons —which may well be "offensive" weapons—under cover of a refusal to discuss where and against whom they may have to be used. Mark Twain said that everyone complained of the weather but no one did anything about it. In this case there are complainers, of whom Mr. Villard now takes the lead, and the wrong thing is done. It is about to be done again—increased appropriations at the next session of Congress in a vacuum from which thought has been excluded.

From what competent quarter comes any denial that the geographical position of the United States makes us well-nigh impregnable against invasion or even attack? Generals and admirals admit it before Congressional committees—Mr. Villard quotes them—and then ask that appropriations be increased for "defense" purposes. Non-official authorities—Major Eliot and Hanson Baldwin—assert that our defenses are adequate. We have in the United States, as Mr. Villard again points out, less civilian control over, and knowledge of, what the generals and admirals are doing than is the case in any other country which pretends to have representative institutions. In Great Britain the civilian Secretaries of State for War and Air and the First Lord of the Admiralty can dominate their departments. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy here, save when they are men of exceptional qualifications—and that has happened rarely in recent years—are completely the servants of the chief of staff of the army and the chief of naval operations. In Great Britain, apart from the civilian control through the depart mental boards on which civilians and the chiefs of staff sit, there is a coordinating board composed of civilian ministers and service experts, namely, the Committee of Imperial Defense, which has a highly competent secretariat. In the United States the only effective coordination that we can have comes from the President in the spare moments which he is able to take off from attention to legislative programs, concern for a hundred administrative matters, and the tedious burden of ceremonial duties.

Naturally there is competition and duplication rather than coordination. The army has ships, and the navy has land forces. The army has planes for defense beyond the boun daries of the United States, and the navy has land bases from which its planes take off. The two services can't agree on how to play war games jointly so they play separately. Who can assure the country that the huge appropriations are spent wisely? Mr. Villard points out that up until 1938 the American army was spending on horses, mules, and harness as much as it was spending on tanks, arms, and armed vehicles. Years ago the War Department began to complain that our coast defenses were antiquated. It still complains, but in the meantime it has spent hundreds of millions on other things.

Mr. Villard says many true things about the probable waste of appropriations and about the inevitable tendency toward fascist control which comes when civilian effort is directed to a greater and greater degree into military channels—when industry has to be geared to produce for war purposes. His constructive proposals are that there be a Cabinet Secretary for National Defense, with the army and navy subordinate to him. Would this really help?

Both the services would be bitterly hostile and could probably persuade a Congress which had accepted the principle of a single department from passing legislation essential to effect real reorganization. Hence the Defense Secretary would be the slave of routine and signing that the Secretaries of War and the Navy now are. Even if he were not, the size of the new organization would be so great as to threaten its efficiency. What is needed first is not unified administration, but more thought. If that is adequate, the administrative problem solves itself. Hence the more promising procedure would be to have a super-secretary for the coordination of defense, like Viscount Chatfield in England. Of course such a Presidential *alter ego* would have to be an extraordinarily able man, for his job would have to be done by intelligence, by watchfulness, by tact, by pressure, and by publicity. If these qualities did not suffice, he would ask the President to interfere and function as commander-in-chief. That would be better than, and might in the end lead to, an amalgamation of departments. For another of Mr. Villard's proposals—that there be a committee of inquiry to determine the extent to which we need more defense weapons and the extent to which the weapons for which we have poured out much

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

treasure may be adequate in certain emergencies—there can only be approval. But who dares hope that the suggestion will be acted upon?

Years ago Lord Salisbury declared that "if you believe the doctors, nothing is wholesome; if you believe the theologians, nothing is innocent; if you believe the soldiers nothing is safe." The trouble with this country is that it doesn't make the soldiers and sailors say why they want more money. The soldiers increase personnel, and the ratio of officers to enlisted men—exceeded only in certain South American states—becomes less noticeable. The sailors ask first for battleships and then for the other units that are necessary to protect them—in harbors which it is too risky to leave. Do battleships defend a country? The events of the last and the present war have not shouted an affirmative answer. They suggest that the word "dreadnaught" will be dropped from the naval vocabulary.

LINDSAY ROGERS

The Traditions and Henry Miller

TROPIC OF CAPRICORN. By Henry Miller. Paris: The Obelisk Press. 60 francs.

IN THIS latest scarlet volume Henry Miller ironically inquires of us whether we do not recognize in him "just a Brooklyn boy communicating with the red-haired albinos of the Zuni region." Honesty dictates the reply to this brilliant writer that, while we do perceive his wildness, primarily we conceive him to be the Casabianca among American expatriates.

He went abroad, he has told us, in 1928. Born in Brooklyn in 1891 of parents of German extraction, he had worked awhile at tailoring, his father's profession. Later he had acted as personnel director of a big corporation, and "in off hours had been a concert pianist." He had also been struggling to write. He has remained almost continuously in Paris. It was his intention, he assures us, "to study vice." The subject must have proved immense. The years of the depression multiplied. The great mass of literary expatriates gave up the ship. Miller unbudgeably "stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled"; maintaining himself with newspaper hackwork; hilariously editing the *Booster,* a leaflet of the American Country Club; writing prolifically.

The flames "shone 'round him o'er the dead." They also shone on a new, international group of dreamers and dithyrambic prose-men in process of formation in the hospitable city, including himself. The Anglo-Irishman, Lawrence Durrell; Anaïs Nin, the Spanish woman who writes volcanically in English; Alfred Perlès, the Viennese who gently writes in French; and the rest of the fresh and troubling talents that composed it were, like Miller, giving surrealism new life. They were bringing to light in larger prose forms like the novel the perpetual flow of irrational thought shaped in images which occurs in every human mind. In Paris, too, this last heroic representative of the once flourishing literary tradition of expatriation has found a publisher. The Obelisk Press issued first his violently visionary "Black Spring"; later, his "Tropic of Cancer," the book which bestowed upon Miller if not international fame at least a fairly substantial notoriety; then, the miscellany "Max and the White Phagocytes"; and, most recently, "Tropic of Capricorn." (The less "tropical" of these works have proved unobjectionable to the American censor. New Directions is publishing in November, under the title "The Cosmological Eye," the meat of "Max" and representative sections of "Black Spring." The same publisher is including in its annual collection "New Directions in Prose and Poetry" for 1939 three chapters of "Tropic of Capricorn," which is not at present available here.)

These books redouble our impression of Miller's Casabianca-like steadfastness. One and all reveal the fact that this survivor of the ancient order of American Writers Abroad is also conspicuously faithful to another tradition, recently neglected by newer American writers, and indisputably valuable. In general, it is the tradition of originality. Specifically, it is that of D. H. Lawrence and of Hart Crane: the custom of production in the spirit of a celebration of life, in a condition of white heat, through the exploitation of a rich vocabulary. New phenomena and formally significant of a new content, Miller's volumes have fire—bright for all its coldness—and comic extravagance. His prose at its most characteristic is elevated in pitch, lyrical, dithyrambic. The sometimes brutal style is prevalently high-colored; spare, but in many instances precious and magnificent. The experience half bitterly, half humorously represented by it, while mainly comprehensive of the present "winter" upon earth, lassitude, decomposition, frozen sexuality—it includes well-nigh ecstatic sensations of ugliness and disgust—equally comprehends the hibernation of forces, the first tiny reemergence of light. The vital rhythm is the essence of the literature.

In "Tropic of Cancer"—the notorious book is an original picaresque novel, alternating direct narrative and rhapsody—the frozen rubble is symbolized by the chaotic beings of moldy or riotous bohemians of the Latin Quarter; the new seeds by the driving forces in the personality of the subjective, lyrical narrator. He is a writer, sharing their sterile riot but believing in himself. He starves and suffers for the sake of freedom to express his feeling of the truth. What is working in him, besides stoical resignation to the ignominies of existence, is a sense of a worth in life independent of hope of change or progress: also an artist's ability, forming within the circle of his spiritual solitude, to exist by expression. It is a pity that, with all its penetration, frequent sensuous density, and chains of surrealist images couched in grandiose prose, this book of 1934 has qualities which render not easily resistible the temptation to dismiss its author as less than an artist. The smaller of them lies in the slackness of the form and the circumstance that the style oftentimes pounds the note of violence. The greater inheres in the circumstance that, despite its vigor and exuberance, "Tropic of Cancer" is often obscene to the verge of pornography.

Doubtless, pictures of prostitution and vulgar expressions of conflicting sexual attraction and repulsion inevitably were its symbols. None the less, it is difficult for us to reconcile ourselves with the heaviness and would-be comic spirit of exaggeration with which Miller frequently has handled these materials, or with their superfluous abundance. To say that the book's positive qualities, while they do not quite compensate the critical reader for the massive filth, at least encourage him to endure it, is therefore to give the measure of Miller's worth. We have mentioned some of these quali-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties. Another is "Tropic of Cancer's" caricatural yet accurate presentation of a special human type. This type is that of excessively demoralized Werthers and Hamlets: neurasthenic individuals, apparently produced by their families' over-rapid transition from an uncultured stratum to a cultured one, imprisoned by inner conflicts which they share with the unaggressive adolescent and the idealist who learns that love of the good, true, and beautiful has no seat in the vast majority of human hearts. Almost cruelly but inimitably, Miller hits off their cerebral confusion and enervate amours.

In a spirit of celebration, "Tropic of Capricorn," the new volume, also represents an experience of the birth of new life from beneath the prevalent old. Its verbal pattern is a contrast between two selves and existence presented as autobiography. The one is that imposed on the narrator by his aggressive American milieu, or better, the ugly existence that his efforts to conform to ways never his own imposed on him —he is a black swan, partly the product of changing conditions and probably molded upon his gargantuan author. The other is the desperate, lonely, but gratifying life of inwardness and expression which by fits and starts slowly replaced the first. Symbols evoking whole landscapes of tough, lower-middle-class Brooklyn life tersely exhibit the narrator's early environment, his father's abject end, the rank habits and characters of his business associates, above all the shallow, febrile eroticism which may readily have been the entail of his denial of himself. Again the constructive principle is the conviction that "*being* is marvelous"—fortified in this instance by the conviction that "full consciousness is like an inexhaustible ocean which gives itself to the sun and moon and also *includes* the sun and moon."

If possible, even more shockingly than in "Tropic of Cancer," a load of partially inevitable, mainly superfluous obscenity befouls many pages. The spirit of the excessive, orgiastic, and eruptive troublingly suffuses even the cleaner ones. A particularly noteworthy section paradoxically glorifies madness. These and other blemishes, however, do not obscure the volume's grand qualities.

Pages of its prose are even more incandescent than the dithyrambic ones in its predecessor. Its surrealistic imagery is forceful. The Poe-esque climate of a neurotic love relation, represented by an episode, is conjured up with phrases such as "We lived in black holes with drawn curtains, we ate from black plates, we read from black books. . . . Each morning she soared aloft from her perch as from some Himalayan peak; she seemed always to direct her flight toward some uncharted region into which, if all went well, she would disappear forever." The form—again it is directly narrative in parts and rhapsodic in others—actually is more original than that of the other "Tropic." It is wholly surrealistic. Now satiric, now nostalgic, and now extravagant or ecstatic, the moods and their symbols illogically interweave. The experience itself was irrational. The process of birth appeared a spasmodic, discontinuous one to the author.

The form, besides, is tighter than "Cancer's"; the various moods and their symbols are sustained and contrasted. The feeling is often deep and clear. The cultural references have a wide range. Among Miller's most priceless pages are the many portraying with his characteristic bitterness and exuberance Brooklyn streets, American big business, and specimens of the New York white-collar class. Few writers, indeed, have more of the essential New York and Brooklyn in their blood than this our twofold Casabianca. A disturbing but involuntary and affirmative force has projected itself fully in "Tropic of Capricorn," making contemporary American literature richer for a free and important author.

PAUL ROSENFELD

Death of a Soldier

A CHILD OF OUR TIME. By Odon von Horvath. The Dial Press. $2.

THE fascists command the masses to believe, obey, and fight, and the nameless protagonist of this ardent and compact little novel—which is as topical as the latest news bulletin from the battlefronts of Europe—gladly complies with both the letter and the spirit of the stern injunction. He is no hero, this young man, nor was ever meant to be; he is no more than a child of his time, the product of a cruel and unceasing struggle for a meal, a job, a home. Indeed, what reason could he have to resist the demands of the Moloch state? During the years of the despised democracy he had been jobless and alone, whereas as soon as the Führer takes over he joins the reconstituted army, planning to carve out for himself a career as a soldier. And it is quite right that he should nowhere in the narrative be designated by name, for of what avail is self-identity to a man who is inordinately proud of being "in line with the rest," who repeatedly notes that the individual no longer counts and that nothing is real save the fatherland, which, of course, must be avenged. It is better to live than to think. "Man is just an animal, and our leaders are animals too, though gifted in a special way."

Eventually, however, this mass-man of the Third Reich discovers the impossibility of abolishing the mind; and it is the very state on whose power he has relied to provide him with security and shield him from consciousness which in the end throws him on the scrap-heap. Now he is again helpless and alone, except, pointedly enough, for a quantity of brand-new and contentious thoughts. This unexpected reversal occurs when he returns home wounded from service as a "volunteer" in a "punitive expedition" let loose against a small and defenseless country. There is no reward in store, no care or pity, for the discharged soldier who has helped to lay low an innocent people. The sole momento of victory in his grasp is an intercepted letter from the captain of his regiment explaining that he was committing suicide because of his inability to endure the shame of fighting in a war which was actually no war at all but "a mean and cunning onslaught on women and children." A civilian in spite of himself, he is now faced with the vertiginous experience of regaining his lost individuality. But that is exactly what the regimented fatherland will not tolerate—and the soldier reborn as a man freezes to death on a bench in a public park.

In recent literature there has been no lack of protest, at once emotionally eloquent and intellectually informed, against the totalitarian assault on humanity. But few have written so effectively on anti-fascist themes as Odon von Horvath, the gifted young playwright and novelist who died in exile last year. In "A Child of Our Time," as in the previously pub-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lished narrative, "The Age of the Fish," he was above all concerned with representing the struggle of the human being to survive in a dehumanized environment. And though it was not to a workable social program but rather to ethical principles and transcendental ideas that he looked for the defeat of fascism, still there are very few generalities in his work that interfere with the creative assimilation of political facts. Horvath's harried Germans are properly placed within the material world; only their dreams of heaven are dreamy.

PHILIP RAHV

Radio Round by Round

HOW WAR CAME. By Raymond Gram Swing. W. W. Norton and Company. $2.

IF ANYONE doubts that Raymond Gram Swing is our number one radio commentator, let him read this book, which is a collection of Mr. Swing's news talks giving a round-by-round account of how the crisis developed into war. Starting with the German seizure of Czechoslovakia last March, there are occasional talks until August 21, and then two or three talks a day through September 3, when the white war became a crimson war. Through the mist of secret diplomacy—a mist which Mr. Swing penetrated better than any other commentator—the grisly drama unfolds during the tense summer of Hitler threats up to the hour when Britain and France decided they could back down no more.

Thanks largely to Mr. Swing, the art of interpreting news by radio is growing out of its primitive stage. He refuses to sensationalize news in the breathless, mile-a-minute manner made popular by the late Floyd Gibbons. He does not allow himself to become hysterical and crusade for his own beliefs (*vide* Boake Carter, Dorothy Thompson, and Father Coughlin). He does not have to dilute the content of his stuff through ad libbing most of it, as do H. V. Kaltenborn and Elmer Davis. Raymond Swing writes his talks out, after having mulled over the day's happenings in the light of his own European experience dating back to World War days, and after careful research. His mind, being sophisticated, works with a rare objectivity—a gift that should be more prized in all forms of news-dispensing.

Mr. Swing never peddles spurious "inside dope"; his technique is to outline various possible meanings which may lie in a diplomatic development, and then offer his own estimate. Some of his guesses were wrong; many of them were surprisingly right. Immediately after the seizure of Czechoslovakia he began predicting that Poland would be the next victim. On March 14 he doubted whether Stalin would go to war to help Britain and France, and on May 4, nearly four months ahead of the event, he wondered if Stalin had come to an understanding with Hitler. Later, to be sure, he misguessed Russia's motives; on August 29 he thought Stalin was trying to prevent Hitler from attacking Poland. The most remarkable of his forecasts was on July 10 when he outlined Hitler's plan for the war which was to start seven weeks later. Hitler, Swing said, "may think that . . . he can beat Poland in short order, and then turn to the British and French and offer peace . . . not having sent his air raiders over London and Paris. He can ask, why go on fighting?"

It would be interesting to know whether a radio commentator could adapt Mr. Swing's technique to domestic affairs, where more listeners' toes are apt to be stepped on, more advertisers annoyed. Could our typical business man endure to hear a discussion of the C. I. O. by a man as objective as Mr. Swing? Would our typical Republican allow a broadcasting chain to evaluate the New Deal as fairly and frankly as Mr. Swing evaluates more remote developments?

Getting back to "How War Came," there is one drawback common to all collections of radio talks. They don't actually add much to our knowledge of a subject; reading them is somewhat like reading a mystery story after you know who killed whom. Perhaps this book, and others like it, will be more interesting ten or twenty years from now. They will revive the mood of the incredible weeks preceding the war and will make us marvel at how little even the shrewdest of us knew about the forces leading the world to catastrophe.

MARCUS DUFFIELD

Poetry as Love

THE BURNING ORACLE. By G. Wilson Knight. Oxford University Press. $4.25.

WILSON KNIGHT'S equipment as a critic of poetry is unique in its richness today. No one listens to the lines of the old masters with such eager and generous devotion, or with such understanding ears. The richness is so great indeed as to be sometimes embarrassing; or, to put it another way, Mr. Knight's powers are imperfectly balanced along the thin line any critic must walk between thought and feeling. His thoughts are as rich as his feelings, but their expression is less clear. The theme which he pursues through these essays on Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Pope, and Byron is a difficult one to state, since it has to do with matters fundamental to the art of poetry; and perhaps we should expect no one to state it finally. We can imagine, however, a clearer success than Mr. Knight has achieved in those passages which make the attempt directly. There should have been more such passages or none at all—the latter alternative being the likelier in view of Mr. Knight's genius at suggestion. This genius is such, in fact, that the theme of his book is everywhere implicit in it, and even lucidly so. It is only when he sets out to be lucid—to explain, to recapitulate—that clouds gather. "We must always remember," he says of Shakespeare, "what the plays are, not only what they say: what they say, indeed, seeming sometimes merely as dust obscuring the poetry's ultimate direction." His own ultimate direction is least obscure when he seems least aware of it; when, that is to say, he is writing his essays as good poets write their poems, out of saturation rather than of conviction.

When he is writing that way he is unsurpassed, nor can there be doubt of his direction. His theme, for instance, expresses itself perfectly in sentences like the following—sentences which, with their contexts, are the result in each case of an absorption with the poetry immediately at hand:

> Shakespeare is continually *married* to whatever he is treating, accepting it as itself and as a whole. His animals and people are thus neither ideal nor realistic, but real: the vital principle of each is apprehended and their actions are therefore powerful.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Though Shakespeare's world is crammed with all kinds of evil, loathing, horror, it is not itself evil, because ordered; and could not have been ordered without first being, all of it, understood and therefore loved; and could not have been loved if it were not, in essence, vital and therefore good. . . . You can never properly distinguish good from evil whilst you are hating either, still less if you are fearing either; and indeed must love both before you are in a position to prefer one.
>
> Milton is . . . a grand pagan, and half knows it. Therefore his barbaric splendors are necessarily most convincing when most condemned, with a condemnation that yet enhances their essential glory. In hell Milton buries the whole heroic past of the race, its intellectual and artistic achievements, its ambition and greed, courage and futility; while the requiem is his noblest poetry. The willed effort to create a corresponding grandeur for heaven from the materials already, and in part rightly, repudiated, is necessarily unconvincing.
>
> Such subtlety of technique cannot of itself harmonize a wide chaos. . . . The result is, too often, a thin, wavering time-stream rather than a created world. Rhythmic and verbal modulation work to remedy a preliminary weakness in organization. This is how Milton becomes, in places, our most perfect "technician" while failing as a "maker" in the wider sense. He tries to do by art what art by itself cannot do.
>
> Byron is the only poet since Shakespeare to possess one of Shakespeare's rarest gifts: that of pure artistic joy in the annals . . . of human action; in close association, moreover, with places.

All of that and more is what Mr. Knight's book says—or, if we remember his distinction, is. "The Burning Oracle" is not so much a statement as a revelation of what poetry can be: a "living stillness," something that leaves us with "a feeling of both power and peace; of a rhythm, deep as winter or night or sleep, necessary to the pulses of existence; of emotional depths that therefore are not finally thwarted; of a thunder that is but a part of some universal music." A high style, but Mr. Knight justifies it by the gift it brings—a sense of poetry at work, and at work for us. We can accept or reject his concluding chapter, in which he tries to say what his book means, but we cannot doubt this sense, for it is already ours.

MARK VAN DOREN

DRAMA

Brave New World!

I WAS, last spring, a member of that sizable minority which looked with favor upon William Saroyan's first gift to the theater, "My Heart's in the Highlands." Perhaps the author was going a bit too far—he often does—when he announced publicly his conviction, not only that the work was a classic, but also that "the greater and truer American theater shall begin its life after the appearance and influence of this piece." He was, however, speaking pertinent truth when he added, "As I see it, the basic trouble with the American theater is that the element of 'play' has been completely forgotten by American playwrights and completely left out of their plays." At least half of Mr. Saroyan's famous impudence consists merely in his ability to be happy in a world which, so the best modern writers have proved, inevitably makes everybody miserable.

"The Time of Your Life," produced at the Booth Theater by Eddie Dowling and the Theater Guild, ought to add considerably to the circle of his admirers. In deference to those who found the previous play too bewildering, it has been given what looks like a realistic setting as well as the outward form of conventional drama, but it is actually as free, as ingenious, and as amusing in its fantasy as "My Heart's in the Highlands." The plot doesn't matter—at least there is no point in reducing it to solemn outline—but the play is about what all its author's stories are about, namely, the fantastic and happy unexpectedness of life when seen through Mr. Saroyan's shamelessly romantic eyes. Its moral is simply that nearly everybody is either good or would like to be if he had not got confused in a society full of problems too hard to solve, and that once you have grasped this fact the world is so full of delightfully surprising things that we all should be quite a good deal happier than kings. The only reason, I think, that this is not said more frequently in literature is simply that it is one of the hardest things in the world to say with convincing sincerity. Only the rare artist can proclaim that he loves people without seeming fatuous, but there is nothing pleasanter to hear when it is said with Mr. Saroyan's ingenuous, disarming exuberance.

All the characters are, to be sure, simply the author in disguise, and they have to be for the simple reason that they need his temperament to be as fantastically themselves as he wants everybody to be. What we get, then, is Mr. Saroyan as the philosophical spectator (played with delightful unction by Eddie Dowling), Mr. Saroyan as the amiable saloon keeper, Mr. Saroyan as the puzzled cop, as the noble prostitute, as the boastful bum, and, perhaps best of all, Mr. Saroyan as the ambitious young comedian whom everyone admits to be theoretically funny but at whom no one laughs. That means, however, that all the characters are volubly coherent as well as excitingly alive, and I suspect that it is their willingness to go to such lengths in being themselves that is responsible in considerable part for the pleasant glow which the laughter at their extravagance leaves behind.

WAR

WHAT is really going on in Europe? To keep fully informed read *The Manchester Guardian*, for more than a century Europe's leading liberal newspaper. Mailed directly by the publisher, copies of *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* arrive without censorship delay, bringing news from the actual seat of war directly to your letter box sometimes as much as three weeks quicker than first-class mail. Take advantage of our introductory offer of 13 weeks for only $1.00.

Mail your order to

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN
220 WEST 42nd STREET
New York, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Saroyan has undoubtedly been denounced as an "escapist." Such things as his complaint against reformers in the present play—"they are all so anxious to take a bad world and make it worse"—will probably lead to the charge that he is counter-revolutionary besides. But I suspect that an even deeper heresy is responsible for the sense of freedom which accompanies the laughter of the audience. This, we have been told many times of late, is a world in which everything and everybody is determined. Characters are what they are because they can't be anything else. You may be a Marxian and believe them the products of economic determinism, or you may be a Freudian and believe that they are the product of infantile experience. You may even be an endocrinologist and hold that the glands they were born with make it inevitable that they must behave thus and so. But you can't believe that people are unique people. You must believe that they are typical members of the decaying middle class, perfect examples of the mother complex, or characteristically hypo-adrenal. Mr. Saroyan rebels against all this dismal science. He proclaims the strange uniqueness of human beings and presents them achieving themselves to the limit. The result is fantastic, but a world of eccentrics is a gayer sight than a world of robots, and one accepts his mad universe gladly because one is so willing to believe that life is less dully predictable than the "scientific" psychologist or the "scientific" Marxian would have us believe. Far from achieving the Arnold ideal, Mr. Saroyan sees life shakily and sees it in little pieces. But he is highly amusing.

"Too Many Girls" (Imperial Theater) is certainly not inspiringly named, but it turns out to be a first-rate musical comedy written by Rodgers and Hart and staged in very lively fashion by George Abbott. Of the hearty rather than the anemic school, it is full of fast dancing and noisy music, but it manages to be good fun nearly all the time. Favorite songs with the public are "I Want to Hear the Tune" and "Give It Back to the Indians." I liked best an innocently carnal ditty sung by the sweethearts of the football team.

"The Possessed," based more or less on Dostoevski's novel and presented in highly stylized form by a new group, manages to retain the vagueness of the original's philosophy without capturing any of its hypnotic intensity.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

RECORDS

VICTOR'S October records have been delayed; and I can report only on a few of the most important sets. One of them is quite the most inept job of packaging and labeling that I can recall: it combines Toscanini's performance of Paganini's "Moto Perpetuo" with the N. B. C. Symphony's violins, a mere orchestral tour de force, and his performance with the strings of the scherzo and slow movements of Beethoven's Quartet Opus 135, which are among the greatest of works in which greatness of human spirit has expressed itself in artistic terms; and it combines these under the title "Encores" (M-590, $4.50). The gaiety of the scherzo movement has the strangeness that makes portions of the last quartets difficult of access; the slow movement, with its halting middle section, is one of the most deeply affecting embodiments of the exaltation after pain that one hears in these works; and Toscanini gives them an effect which they do not have in any of the other recorded performances. A person, therefore, who wanted to enter the world of the last quartets could do so in no better way than by playing these records repeatedly.

Bruno Walter's excellent new recording of Mozart's Symphony K. 551 (known as the "Jupiter") (M-584, $5.75) invites comparison with Beecham's older one; and such comparison reveals that Beecham's performance has the advantage of the dynamic phrasing that distinguishes his treatment of Mozart, but also the disadvantage of his overdeliberate pace in the minuet movement, and is recorded with ample clarity and fidelity to timbre. Similar comparison reveals that Gieseking's playing in his recent set of Beethoven's Sonata Opus 57 ("Appassionata") may have a little too much nervous excitement; but if this robs the work of its rugged power it gives it intensity and passion; whereas Serkin's performance (M-583, $6.50) gives it placidity. In addition, the piano is recorded with more beauty of sound in Gieseking's set.

The new set of Brahms's Violin Concerto (M-581, $9) offers the solo part played by Heifetz with dazzling perfection of technique, with dazzling radiance of tone, with simplicity of phrasing; and the orchestral part played by the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzy with fabulously beautiful sonorities that are reproduced with the spaciousness and fidelity of present-day recording. To these the old Columbia set, with its shabby recording of an undistinguished orchestral performance, can oppose only the superbly dynamic style of Szigeti's handling of the solo part; but that is a great deal.

I do not find all the pieces in Alice Ehlers's album of harpsichord music (Decca Set 61, $2.75) enjoyable; nor do her performances seem to me distinguished. Gomez's guitar-playing, on the other hand, is exciting even in the mediocre music that he has recorded in Decca Set 60 ($2.75).

Among recent jazz records a few good ones are "The Fives" of Basie and his rhythm section (Decca 2722); Billy Kyle's "Finishin' Up a Date" (Decca 2740); Mildred Bailey's "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" (Vocalion 5086) for the playing of what I take to be members of the Kirby band; and Ellington's "The Sergeant Was Shy" (Columbia 35214).

Correction: The price of the Scott thirty-tube Philharmonic, printed as $397.50 in last week's column, should have been $379.50. And I might add that a person who can afford this set should inquire of Scott whether it is possible to use the superior Audax D-36 pickup, which costs $22.64 at Radio Wire Television, Inc.

B. H. HAGGIN

In Early Issues of The Nation

Talents in the Wilderness—1. John Steinbeck
First of a series of articles by Margaret Marshall

"Freedom and Culture" by John Dewey
Reviewed by William Gruen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters to the Editors

Defending the U. S. S. R.

Dear Sirs: American liberal support of the Soviet Union has always been contingent upon its good behavior—according to our amateur concepts of what constitutes good behavior on the part of a socialist republic in a capitalist world. Every shift of Soviet policy to meet changing conditions at home and abroad has found us joining the enemy chorus of boos and hisses. We have denounced in turn the New Economic Policy, the Five-Year Plan, collectivization, joining the League of Nations, the Franco-Soviet pact, and after the pact's collapse at Munich the recall of Litvinov, the treason trials—and finally the Soviet-Nazi pact. We proclaimed "the end of socialism" in 1937 and the "liquidation of communism" in 1939.

Ours was a hypercritical friendship, constantly demanding "explanations" from Moscow. At the same time we were shamefaced about open collaboration with the Soviet Union, even when admitting that we were seeking the same ends. Understanding in a vague way that the international policies of the U. S. S. R. were anti-fascist, we condescendingly allowed Russia to be a fellow-traveler in the American struggle against war and fascism. Few clearly understood that, precisely because the U. S. S. R. is a functioning socialist economy, it is a congenital foe of fascism, whether in the bold, forthright form of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy or the more covert and crafty form of the Chamberlain and Daladier cliques, and their anti-New Deal colleagues. In timid deference to red-baiters, American liberals hesitated to support the Soviet Union openly when its powerful voice was raised in protest against the invasion of Manchuria, Ethiopia, China, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Memel.

At the Pittsburgh People's Congress in 1937, in all the impassioned speeches and resolutions of protest against fascist aggression, the U. S. S. R. was studiously ignored, although it was the only nation which was giving concrete aid to the victims of aggression. Thus, while we were shouting President Roosevelt's slogan about quarantining the aggressor, we ourselves were quarantining the most active foe of aggression.

This confused, defensive policy was even more apparent at the Writers' Congress last June. In all the eloquent speeches against fascist invasions, the Soviet Union was not mentioned, despite the fact that it was the only government to give aid to China and Spain, the only nation which had been ready to fulfil its treaty obligations toward Czechoslovakia up to the moment the Czech government itself refused aid. Thus, unity on the literary front was preserved by pretending that the Soviet Union did not exist. This false unity led to the present confusion, disruption, and bitterness.

Every time a liberal opens his mouth to denounce the Soviet-German pact, he should have the facts about the Moscow negotiations with Britain rammed down his throat: four months of "dawdling" with a "fifth-rate Foreign Office bureaucrat" and then a "thoroughly inferior military mission" without credentials or instructions; British double-crossing in the Hudson-Wohlthat negotiations with Hitler for a billion-pound "appeasement loan"; British refusal to give adequate guaranties in the Baltic states; and the crowning absurdity of Poland's refusal to accept the aid of Soviet troops on Polish soil, in which it was backed by Britain. Obviously, "negotiations" had collapsed when Russia opened conversations with Berlin, although the impotent military mission hung on in Moscow, hoping, perhaps, to prevent the Russians from taking any alternative measures of defense against Hitler's scheduled march into Poland to the gates of the coveted Ukraine. Had the English people seen behind that screen, they would have known who was to blame for the loss of the Russian cooperation they had clamored for, and would have demanded the resignation of Chamberlain.

As it was, under cover of the confusion, Chamberlain was able to exploit the consequences of his latest betrayal (the Soviet-German pact); Daladier established an outright fascist dictatorship, arresting Communist deputies just as Hitler had done when he came to power; while the Dies committee profited by the example.

The "timing" of the pact was what devastated the smartest of Russia's intellectual friends. These experts said this had precipitated Hitler's attack on Poland, although for months they had been prophesying to the day when Hitler would march again. The bitter truth is that it was the collapse of the negotiations in Moscow, because of Chamberlain's sabotage, which "precipitated" the war. Nevertheless, while rushing to brand Stalin the "betrayer," the doughty anti-Nazis forgave Chamberlain all, for he had declared "war"—a new technique of appeasement to replace the mock mobilization before Munich.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain's propaganda office, ably assisted from Berlin, had released upon bewildered America a flood of anti-Soviet propaganda unequaled since the "nationalization of women" era. The cooperation of the American press was gratifying. The editor of the New York *Times* led off with a eulogy of Chamberlain: ". . . robbed by duplicity of an alliance on which he had counted heavily. . . ."

By the time the Red Army marched into Poland, American liberal opinion had become conditioned to the *Times* editorial epithets—"stab in the back," "partners in plunder," "Heil, comrade," etc. But reliable *Times* correspondents and leading British statesmen blamed the Chamberlain government for the loss of Russia to the non-aggression front. They agreed that the Red Army had marched only after Poland had been cold-bloodedly abandoned by her allies, Polish resistance had collapsed, and the government had fled. They were not "sickened" by the similarities to Hitler's slogans when the Red Army came to "liberate their brothers" from the horrors of immediate Nazi invasion and to protect the Soviet frontier—nor skeptical that a socialist republic could rescue an oppressed population where a fascist dictatorship could not.

Then followed Moscow's brilliant strategy which checkmated Hitler in all his plans of Eastern conquest, and made its own defenses impregnable against German attack. The "Russian enigma" is easily solved: Chamberlain dealt with Hitler for two years, gave him everything he wanted (not Britain's), and got nothing but a pledge of "peace in our time." Stalin, excluded from the democratic front, dealt with Hitler for two months in his own way, took away from him everything he wanted, and gave him nothing but a pledge to support a peace plea. To accomplish this,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Soviet government made no effort to soften popular hatred of Nazism at home (Gedye, September 29), broke no treaties, robbed no peoples of their liberties, but cleaned out the nests of pro-Nazi and anti-Soviet intrigue in the Baltic states and saved the Balkans from imminent capitulation to Hitler.

While shocked liberals deserted to the Chamberlain-Daladier war camp, Russia *stopped Hitler.* The *cordon sanitaire* around Russia is smashed, the anti-Comintern pact is shattered, and wails of American liberals that the temporary truce with Japan meant that Russia had abandoned China have proved unfounded.

As in 1917, American liberals are facing momentous decisions. Since the Russian Revolution our worst mistakes may be traced to our stupid distrust of Soviet policy and our readiness to believe Russia's enemies. For twenty-two years Soviet Russia has withstood civil war, blockade, Allied intervention, slander, conspiracies within and without. This pressure from a hostile capitalist world has hampered the creation of material prosperity, and made those individual liberties Americans enjoy in peace time a luxury for the Russians.

Today, as we look toward Europe, the thick fog of censorship and propaganda obscures the view. To the west lie the marshes of Old World intrigue and social disintegration, letting off the stench of decay. To the east, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics looms on the horizon, like the Soviet pavilion at the World's Fair, a solid reality of the World of Tomorrow.

RUTH EPPERSON KENNELL

Palo Alto, Cal., October 22

Mr. Untermeyer Protests

Dear Sirs: It was gratifying to see your review of my "From Another World" headed with the pleasant alliteration: "Amazing and Amusing." Nevertheless I am ungrateful enough to protest against Miss Babette Deutsch's assumption that the book is a cross between "a revised edition" of my "New Era in American Poetry" and "an expansion of the commentary" in my anthologies, as well as her implication that the volume is, essentially, a set of uncritical critiques. Perhaps "From Another World" is not a completely self-revealing autobiography, but it is (obviously, I should think) a book of reminiscences, a set of informal memoirs, which happen to have the literary scene for the immediate background.

Miss Deutsch takes a pretty feline thrust at my sense of discrimination in that I am "not over-critical." She shows, for example, that my chapters devote ten pages to Nathalia Crane as prodigy and only two and three-quarter pages to T. S. Eliot as poet. It might be explained that for years I was an intimate friend of the young Brooklynite who puzzled the world, and nothing more than a literary acquaintance of the eminent expatriate who bewildered it. It is as a series of personal portraits that I hope my book will be read; not as an attempt to deliver conclusive critical verdicts.

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Elizabethtown, N. Y., October 27

"The Annenberg Empire"

Dear Sirs: The issue of *The Nation* dated September 16 contained an editorial on the crack-up of the Moe Annenberg racetrack gambling empire. It was a courageous editorial and it was forceful. The Chicago *Daily News* reprinted your editorial conspicuously on its editorial page. This really great Midwest newspaper has been outstanding in its news treatment of the whole Annenberg case. It has, likewise, printed some very pungent editorial comments on this smelly mess—conduct all the more to its credit when one understands the Chicago political, banking, and social influences which have so far stood shoulder to shoulder in support of Moe. Of course, your articles by Mr. Warren in the summer of 1938 told of the complete control of the local courts by the Pat Nash political machine.

HOMER GUCK

Eagle Harbor, Mich., October 15

John Hammond on B. H. H

Dear Sirs: B. H. Haggin, in your issue of October 14, had a lot to say about jazz criticism with which I agree completely, but I feel that I ought to point out certain unintentional misrepresentations of my taste in the field of jazz. In the first place I agree entirely with Mr. Haggin that Benny Goodman's 1934 performance of "Moonglow" is far better music, and incidentally far better swing, than any of his 1938 recordings. And I need only say I don't remember having praised, either personally or in print, any of the 1938 music of the large band of Benny Goodman, which passed through a musically sterile stage from which it has just recently emerged. My personal preferences have always been for small intimate groups rather than for large bands which I realize must pander to the public taste.

I hope that what Mr. Haggin says about my "ambition" isn't true, but I'm afraid that it is not for me to deny it. I deny bitterly, however, that I am more partial to a musician because his color is black and that there are as many "extraneous irrelevant considerations" in my writing as he maintains. I realize, also, that my present position at Columbia makes it pretty nearly impossible for me to function properly as a critic, and therefore I have stopped whatever critical writing I once did for magazines.

There is just one thing I want to add. I think that Mr. Haggin is the best-equipped and most penetrating critic in the country, and I think you are lucky to have him.

JOHN HAMMOND

New York, October 30

CONTRIBUTORS

CAREY McWILLIAMS, author of "Factories in the Field," is State Commissioner of Immigration and Housing in California.

HARRY BLOCK is *The Nation's* correspondent in Mexico.

ALEXANDER WERTH, Paris correspondent of the Manchester *Guardian,* has recently published a book entitled "France and Munich—Before and After the Surrender."

MAX LERNER is professor of political science at Williams College. His article will appear in a forthcoming book, "Ideas Are Weapons."

EMIL LUDWIG is the author of numerous studies of European leaders and movements.

LINDSAY ROGERS is professor of public law at Columbia University.

PAUL ROSENFELD is a frequent contributor of articles on literature and art to *The Nation, New Republic,* and other magazines.

PHILIP RAHV is an editor of the *Partisan Review.*

MARCUS DUFFIELD is a New York newspaperman.

MARK VAN DOREN has just published a book on Shakespeare.

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

THE NATION, 55 Fifth Ave., New York. Price 15 cents a copy. By subscription—Domestic: One year $5; Two years $8; Three years $11. Additional Postage per year: Foreign, $1; Canadian, 50 cents. The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Dramatic Index, Index to Labor Periodicals, Public Affairs Information Service. Two weeks' notice and the old address as well as the new are required for change of address.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED